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KARMEL THE SCOUT

OR

THE REBEL OF THE JERSEYS

A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

BY

SYLVANUS COBB, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "THE GUNMAKER OF MOSCOW," "THE STORM
SECRET," "ORION, THE GOLD-BEATER," ETC.

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PUBLISHERS' INTRODUCTION.

“Karmel the Scout” is one of Sylvanus Cobb, Jr.’s, very best stories. The scene is laid in the picturesque region of New Jersey occupied by the British and Continental troops in the stirring days of the Revolutionary War. The incidents described are many of them true to history, with just enough romance thrown in to make an exciting and connected story. Old Karmel himself was a real personage, and real characters play a prominent part in the story, giving it a double interest thereby, for fascinating as is fiction fact is more so. When a reader feels that the exciting story he has been reading is a true one he takes a double satisfaction out of it. The hero of the story—that is, the hero after Karmel—is a dashing young captain who did good service for Gen. Washington on the high seas, while the villain is a colonel in the army of his British Majesty. An author who lays his story in such times as those of the American Revolution has material to work from that it would be hard to find hanging around the story of any other war. From Bunker Hill to Yorktown it is one continued chapter of thrilling adventure and heroic action. Mr. Cobb has made the most of his splendid material, and “Karmel the Scout” will hold the attention of thousands of readers until the candle drops in its socket and the clock tells off the small hours of the morning.



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KARMEL THE SCOUT;

OR

THE REBEL OF THE JERSEYS.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG REBEL AND THE SCOUT.

It was on a cold afternoon, in the latter part of January, 1777. The ground was covered with a deep snow, and the air was sharp and cutting. Not far from Amboy, New Jersey, on a road running north, traveled a man, in whose affairs we have some interest. He was young—not over four-and-twenty; of medium height; strong, and stoutly built; with wavy hair of a dark brown hue, and eyes of a brilliant, dark-bluish gray. Upon his handsome features there was a cast of firmness and strength of purpose which was not to be mistaken; and they who knew him best, knew that a trust was safe with him. His dress betrayed him to be a seafaring man and an officer, though the rough pea-jacket which he wore as an additional barrier against the cold had but little of the official look about it. He was mounted upon a powerful horse, upon the back of which, beneath the saddle, was spread a warm blanket. Both beast and rider were well protected from the cold, and all would have gone well, but for the state of the road.

As we have intimated, the traveler was bound northward, and he found the road anything but easy to travel.

Some one had been over the road since the last fall of snow, but the tracks had been filled by the driving wind, so that our present wayfarer was under the necessity of opening his own way. In some places the snow was piled up in such banks that the horse had to wallow through without foothold ; while at others he could walk for some distance quite comfortably. Yet it was tedious work, and more than once the rider plainly expressed his impatience.

"Easy—easy, Lion," he said, addressing his horse, as a huge bank was reached. "We must take our time. Zounds ! we shan't reach Elizabethtown to-night, at this rate. Easy—easy. There we go !"

As he spoke, they emerged from the bank, and the rider was upon the point of urging his horse on, when he noticed that the animal behaved strangely. There was a tossing of the head—a pricking of the ears, and a low, meaning whinny. The man drew in the rein and stopped, and then turned his head. The problem was solved. There was a horseman behind him ; and as he had partially a path, the other came on more easily.

The first impression of our friend seemed to be to keep on ; for those were times when it was not very safe to pick up acquaintances on the road. However, at the worst, it could only be man to man ; so he stopped ; but before the stranger came up he unbuttoned the lower part of his heavy jacket, and in arranging the garment so that it could be quickly raised in case of need, he revealed the butts of two large boarding-pistols.

The new-comer was a man not easily to be forgotten, having been once seen. He was some fifty years of age ; rather short in stature, but stout enough in frame to make up for it. His shoulders were broad and heavy ; but yet of just proportion, his whole frame being "stocky" and muscular in the extreme. His face was mostly covered by a long, thick growth of beard, which was of an iron-gray color, and which was untrimmed by either shears or razor. Yet he had none of that "bearish" look which sometimes results from an unshaven face. His beard grew regularly, leaving the upper part of the cheeks bare, and his features were plain and pleasing, though they possessed an ex-

pression which might not have been so pleasing to a foe. His eyes were strangely sharp and keen ; of a deep brown hue, and seeming at times like two sparks of fire, beneath the heavy brows. His dress consisted of thick moccasins ; leggins of deer-skin ; a hunting-shirt of dark brown stuff, trimmed with blue ; a short, cape-like cloak of bear-skin, and a cap of seal-skin. The shirt was secured about the waist by a stout leathern belt, within which were secured two heavy pistols and a long, broad-bladed knife. A pouch, or haversack, of untanned skin, hung by his side, while across his back was slung a long rifle. Such was the stranger, and he was one well calculated to excite the scrutiny of any who might meet him.

"Good day, sir," said the young man, as the other came up, at the same time casting a searching glance into his face.

"The same to yourself, sir," was the response.

"This is rather hard traveling," resumed the first.

"Aye—it must have been for you. But I got along quite comfortably in your track."

"I suppose so," returned the youth. And thereupon ensued a silence of some moments, which was at length broken by the elder of the two.

"I know these are dangerous times," he said ; "and most people like to keep themselves to themselves ; but if I may judge from your face and general look, you are a Rebel."

"Does my face bear the look of such ?" the young man asked, not at all moved.

"It bears the look of an American child ; and also wears an honest expression ; so I judged you were one who would rebel against tyranny, especially when that tyranny was binding its chains upon the country of your love."

"Throw out your flattery, sir, and speak the truth," said the youth. "I am a rebel."

The old man reached forth his hand and caught his new-found companion with a hearty grip.

"And here is a pair of us," he said with a smile. "Perhaps you have heard of a somewhat notorious Rebel called KARMEL ?"

"What? *The Scout?*" cried the other, quickly.

"Yes."

"Of course I've heard of him. Who has not?"

"Many have, I know. But I am the man. Now will you not serve me as well?"

"Surely I will," the young man answered. "My name is ROBERT PEMBERTON."

"*Captain* Robert Pemberton?"

"Yes—if you will."

The youth had not been more moved by the discovery of his companion's character, than was the latter at the sound of that name. He started suddenly, as if with the presence of some momentous thought, while his face betrayed considerable anxiety.

"You have not been long on shore, I think?" he said.

"No. I have just come in. That is,—I have just got my affairs so arranged that I could leave them."

"Have you been on a cruise?"

"Yes. And I have brought in something that will cause glad hearts at the American camp. Washington is at Morristown, they tell me."

"Yes. The main body of the army is there. But what have you brought in?"

"A heavy store-brig which was meant for General Howe. I captured her a week ago. She has a most valuable cargo. A messenger has already been sent to General Washington, and I suppose he has reached the camp by this time."

"You gave him no written instructions?"

"No, sir."

"Good! good!" cried Karmel, enthusiastically. "But now," he added, in a different tone, "where are you bound?"

"To Elizabethtown."

"So I supposed. You are going to see your sister?"

"Yes, sir. You seem to know me well."

"I know your sister, sir; and you may bless your fate that I do; and also that I have overtaken you as I have. I came over from the lower end of Staten Island very soon after you passed. But your sister is not in Elizabethtown."

"Ha! not in— But where has she gone?"

"To New Brunswick."

"To New Brunswick?" repeated Pemberton, in surprise.

"Why—the British army is there, is it not?"

"Yes."

"It is strange she should have gone there. How long since she went?"

"About two weeks."

"What? when she knew the British were there?"

"Ah—but she did not know it; or, if she did, she was made to believe that they would not remain long there," said the old scout, in a tone, and with a look, that meant more than he spoke.

"How?" uttered the youth, starting; "was made to believe? What do you mean? Speak plainly."

"Well, then—plainly: The woman with whom you left her,—Nancy Reed, I think her name is?"

"Yes," exclaimed Robert impatiently.

—"Is not so honest as she might be. A sum of gold has persuaded her to move to New Brunswick and take her charge with her!"

"That is not all!" gasped the youth, trembling. "Tell me all!"

"I will, though you must not fear too much. An English colonel, named James Lyndarm, has seen her, and tried to win her love; but upon being repulsed, he engaged the services of her hostess. Thus he has got her near to him, and will of course do all he can to win her over."

For some minutes Pemberton was too much moved to speak. A sudden horror had come upon him, and his face betrayed the most intense agony.

"I go to the British camp!" he at length said, in a tone of decision which was not to be mistaken.

"Remember that you have much at stake," hinted the scout. "It will do your sister no good if you are taken prisoner by the enemy."

"I shall venture that. By the powers of life above me, it will be a sorry job for those that think to capture me! Old man," the youth added, in a low, deep tone of more than ordinary feeling, "I love that sister as only one can love who has such. She is a being made up of the holiest virtues of earth. She has been to me a star of promise—a

bright beacon in the darkest hour. I love her—oh ! God only knows how deeply ! And she loves me, too. Oh ! Clara ! Clara ! if harm comes to thee, the man who does it shall wish in his heart that he had been born a worm and never seen the light of day ! ”

There was a bright tear in Robert’s eye as he spoke, and as he dashed it away he turned his horse’s head once more to the northward.

“ Hold—one moment,” interposed the scout. “ Answer me one question : Is there not another whom you love ? ”

“ Why do you ask ? ” the youth returned.

“ Because I have reasons for wishing to know ”

“ Well—there is.”

“ And her name is Rosalie Lincoln ? ”

“ You are right. Is she in danger ? ” Robert asked this with much eagerness.

“ Not such danger as threatens your sister ; but she is yet in danger. Her father will give her away to your cousin Elroy ; and all that has prevented the consummation of the plan is the sickness of her mother.”

A dark cloud swept across the fair face of the young man, and the compression of the bloodless lips told that he was powerfully moved.

“ Rosalie Lincoln is all of life to me : but my sister is as the key of heaven to my soul ! God help me now ! ”

“ And you will let me help you, too ? ” said Karmel, kindly.

“ Will you help me ? ”

“ All in my power.”

“ Even to the British camp ? ”

“ Yes—to the lion’s den.”

“ Then come. There is no time to be lost. We must reach Brunswick to-night.”

“ Not quite, Robert. We shall be fortunate if we reach the Bonham cross-roads to-night. It is now nigh four o’clock, and New Brunswick is a good twelve miles distant. Let us push on for the village, and reach it if we can. I have friends there, and with their help we may contrive some safe plan for crossing the British lines.”

Thus speaking they put their horses upon the trackless way, and pushed on through the snow.

"How far must we go ere we turn off?" asked Robert.

"Only about half a mile," returned the other. "And that road I think we shall find broken some."

After this, the two rode on for some distance in silence, until finally Pemberton said :

"You must excuse me, sir ; but it is natural that I should wish to know why you thus jeopardize your own safety in my behalf."

"Oh!—it is not wholly in your behalf, though I must admit that I have some considerations which are not wholly selfish. Had I not found you I should not have gone now to New Brunswick ; but yet I wish to go there. Of two things you may rest assured : I will help you all I can, and in helping you I shall find my own reward. As far as the British camp is concerned, I have business there of my own. And now let us push on."

In half an hour they came to a point where a road branched off to the westward, and, as the scout had supposed, it had been lately traveled. They turned with it, and for awhile moved on quite comfortably, the horses being able to trot most of the time. But by and by they came to where the wind swept across the path, and here the track was filled up ; so they were forced once more to wallow along slowly through the deep snow.

Night came on apace, and it was very dark. The wind swept freely across the way, and the driving snow at times seemed almost to blind the horses, and they often wandered from the road. Yet they kept on, and at nine o'clock the riders were cheered by the gleaming of lights not far distant, ahead of them. The horses saw this as well as their masters, and it seemed to give them energy, for they had become weary and hungry.

Ere long the riders reached the hamlet, which was composed of some half-dozen farm-houses, a blacksmith's shop, a store, and a schoolhouse, the latter serving also as a meeting-house. Karmel led the way to a substantial-looking house, and knocked at the door. The summons was

answered from one of the windows above, by a man in a white flannel night-cap, who asked what was wanted.

"We want lodgings for the night, for ourselves and horses," returned the scout.

"And who are ye?"

"Friends. Who's in your house?"

"No one but my family."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am."

"Then you have room for Karmel!"

"Eh?—*Karmel*? To be sure I have. Wait one moment, till I get something on to keep the cold off, and I'll bring the boys down to take care of your horses."

With this the man shut the window, and in the course of some five minutes he made his appearance at the door, accompanied by two stout boys. While the boys took the horses away to the barn, the old man conducted the newcomers into the house. In the large kitchen the fire had been raked up in the huge fireplace an hour before, but upon clearing away the ashes a large bed of live coals was found piled up against the back-log, and ere many moments a smart blaze was leaping up the wide-mouthed chimney. As soon as this was done the host took a survey of his guests.

We have called him an old man. He had seen the full measure of three score; but was yet hale and strong, being large in a frame, and possessing good bone and muscle. His name was Peter Armstrong, and he was known as a thrifty farmer, and a hospitable host. He had six sons and four daughters. Four of the sons were with Washington at Morristown, and the two youngest—one fourteen and the other twelve—were with the horses. Two of the daughters were married, and had homes of their own; while the other two were at home.

Ere long one of these entered the room. It was Mary, the eldest at home. She was a bright-eyed, pretty girl, seventeen years of age, and very soon revealed the fact that she knew how to work. A good supper was provided, and the two guests did it ample justice.

After this they conversed awhile upon the affairs of the

country, and then arose to retire, it being now near midnight. The old man had just lighted a second candle, when a rap was heard upon the door—a loud, peremptory knock. Armstrong passed in through the front room and looked out at the window.

“Death and destruction !” he exclaimed, as he turned towards his guests.

“What is it ?” asked the scout.

“Come and see.”

Both Karmel and Robert went to the window, and when they looked out they saw the space before the house occupied by a detachment of British soldiers !

CHAPTER II.

A MORNING'S WORK.

THE host counted fifteen of the soldiers, all of them mounted, drawn up around the door, upon which they were still knocking.

“What’s to be done ?” he asked, turning to the scout.

“I suppose they want lodging for the night,” Karmel replied ; “and perhaps supper. If they do, I don’t see but that you’ll have to admit them.”

“Then you and Captain Pemberton had better go to your room. If they see the door and ask to occupy that apartment, I’ll tell ’em somebody’s sick in there.”

The two patriots knew that it would be useless to expose themselves, so they resolved to retire at once. One of the boys showed them to their room, and shortly afterwards the old man opened the front door to admit the British.

“You don’t mean to say that you’re awake, old sleepy-head,” cried the officer of the squad, as the host made his appearance.

“I mean to say that you awoke me out of a sound sleep,” returned Peter.

“Well, well,—never mind, now. We want you to find room for ourselves and horses till morning. What say ye ?”

"Of course the soldiers of the King are welcome."

"Bravely spoken, old man. We'll eat, drink, and sleep; and then be off. Ugh! it's cold and blustering to-night."

Thus speaking the officer dismounted, and the two boys were again called. Some of the soldiers went with them to the barn, and room for the horses was found without difficulty. The animals of the two Rebels were beyond the cattle, and were not noticed.

The new-comers ate about all there was cooked in the house, and then wished to be shown some place where they could sleep. Most of them preferred to spread their blankets on the kitchen floor, and they did so, two only wishing for a chamber; and these two were the officers—one a sergeant and the other a corporal. The host had but one spare chamber left, and that was adjoining the one in which the two rebels were. He conducted them to that room, and having shown them in, he bade them good night, and hoped they would sleep well. He spoke loud enough so that those in the next apartment might hear, and hence he felt that there would be no need of putting them on their guard further.

Peter Armstrong had taken the wisest course. He knew that the British were able to take what they wanted, and that if they were forced to take it they would be apt to show a vengeful destructiveness. He hated the sight of a British soldier as he did a "skunk in the hen-house," as he often expressed it; but still he was so situated, with the main camp only some six miles distant, that he could not afford to expose himself needlessly to their wrath. They knew not how many stout sons he had in the Rebel army; nor did they know how many bullets his pretty daughters had molded for their brothers' use, in shooting the hirelings of the British King.

Karmel and Robert were both awake, and were listening attentively to hear if anything was said by their neighbors, of importance; but they heard nothing, and finally, when the sound of heavy snoring came from the officers' room, they turned over and went to sleep.

How long they had slept they could not tell, but when

they awoke it was from a loud noise below. They both leaped from their bed and went to the door, and having opened it, they heard the sound of voices in the kitchen, as though some one had just arrived.

"Some of the soldiers have been out to the barn, probably," said Karmel.

This seemed reasonable, and they again retired.

When they were next awakened it was by a light rapping upon their door. They started up, and found that the day was just breaking. Robert went to the door and asked who was there.

"It's me," returned the voice of the host. "The soldiers will be off before long, and you'd better remain here until they go."

"Of course," said the youth. "Have the two officers gone down from the next room?"

"Yes; they were called down half an hour ago. I haven't been down yet, but am going now."

Upon this the old man went down, and the Rebels concluded to return to the bed, as it was too cold to remain elsewhere. Robert had got into his nest, and the scout was about to follow, when a noise from below attracted his attention.

"Hark!" he uttered. "What sound is that?"

"What is it?" asked the youth, sitting up in bed.

"It is the voice of a female! Those infernal troopers have got hold of one of Peter's daughters, as sure as the world!"

Robert leaped from the bed again, and sprang to the door. He listened for a moment and then opened it.

"'Tis a woman's voice," he said.

"Yes," added Karmel; "and she seemed to be in trouble when I first spoke."

"Hist!" uttered the young man, bending his ear towards the stairs. "She is imploring them! Do you not hear? That is not Mary Armstrong's voice!"

"It may be Betsy's, then," suggested Karmel.

"Hark!—No. By heavens! Karmel, 'tis—" The youth broke suddenly off, and listened more attentively. His frame shook fearfully, and his breath came quickly and

heavily. "Oh, my God! 'tis Clara's voice!" he finally gasped, pushing the door open and rushing out.

"Are you sure," asked the scout, catching him by the arm.

"Aye—as sure as I am that you speak to me! Ha! they are binding her! Death and destruction!"

With these words the youth leaped back into the chamber, and drew on his garments as quickly as possible, and then seized both his pistols. The scout had not removed his leggings, so he was ready to move with his companion; and as Robert dashed wildly from the room, he followed close behind him.

Robert Pemberton reached the door of the kitchen at a few bounds, and throwing it open, he rushed in. He had not been mistaken. In a chair sat his sister Clara, with her hands bound, while two stout fellows were engaged in tying a handkerchief over her mouth.

Clara Pemberton was a beautiful girl, nineteen years of age, of medium height, full and plump in form, with a skin of almost dazzling whiteness and purity, and of the most perfect symmetry of frame. Her rich brown hair floated wildly over her shoulders, and her dark, hazel eyes were red and swollen. She looked worn and weary, and her dress was torn in many places. Her feet were shoeless, and even the stockings were cut and torn by the snow-crust and ice.

"Clara! my sister!" he cried, in startled tones, "what would they do? Oh! why is this!"

But ere she could reply others of the soldiers had started up, and were on the point of interfering. There were ten of them in all, in the room, five being in the barn with the horses. The sergeant and corporal were present, and the former, who was a tall, stout fellow, quickly leaped forward.

"Who are you?" he cried.

"Back!" shouted Robert, drawing Clara to the corner, and placing her behind him, and then cocking both his pistols. "The first man who approaches a step nearer, dies on the spot!—Beware! I say; for as sure as death, I'll lay the first man low who dares to trouble me!"

"And I am with him!" said the old scout, also raising

both of his pistols. "Come this way, and you come upon your death!"

The two officers started back at this, for they had no particular wish to die just then; and they were not prepared for this unlooked-for interference.

"How is this, Clara?" the youth asked, as he saw the enemy draw back.

"I fled from Brunswick last night!" she answered, raising her bound hands to her brother's shoulders. Before she spoke further, he drew his knife, which he wore within his outer shirt, and cut the bonds. "I fled from the villainy of Colonel Lyndarm. I leaped from a window, where he had confined me, into the deep snow, while he had gone for wine. I struggled to the road, and turned this way. I lost my shoes in the snow, and my feet were cut and bleeding; but I stopped not, for I feared pursuit. On I went—over the crust, then breaking through, wallowing in the deep banks, and at times flying over the hard frozen ice, where the snow had been blown away. I sank down several times; but I knew I should freeze if I remained so any time, and I hurried on. I reached here three hours ago, and when I sought admittance, a soldier came to admit me. But I hoped he would not know me, and I—"

At this point the maiden was interrupted in her narrative by the approach of some of the troopers. The day was now fully set in, and the five men who had been in the barn had returned, bringing the horses to the door. The sergeant had recovered his presence of mind, and was prepared for action.

"My young gentleman," he said, with a very equivocal emphasis upon the last word, "this young lady is the property of our colonel, and we must take her back."

"The property of your colonel!" uttered Robert, with all the indignation he could command. "She is no man's property, but the daughter of a free and noble man! Touch her who dares!"

"She is the colonel's girl, then," said the sergeant; "and we, as his officers, are bound to restore her to his arms. Now by what right do you claim to protect her!"

"By the right of a brother!" replied the youth, impetuously.

"Aha!—her brother, eh! She has but one brother, I believe, and he is the leader of a gang of Rebel pirates! We are well met!"

"You have discovered me, then, have you! You are welcome to all you can make of it. But let me warn you that he who approaches me dies on the spot!"

The young man was reckless; for the wrongs and suffering which his sister had endured had so wrought upon his passions, that he had no thought of safety. But not so with the scout. He had been more cool; and when he heard his companion so carelessly reveal his true character, his countenance fell. Yet he had one hope. He moved to Robert's side, and hurriedly whispered—

"Back out by the door close to us. I will cover your passage. Hurry!"

The youth caught at the idea, and at once started to put it into execution. With a quick movement he drew his sister to the door which opened into the well-room, and passed out. But an unlooked-for obstacle met him here. Four of the soldiers had come around the house, and were prepared to enter by the way through which the brother and sister had just passed. The two Rebels had seen several of them pass out, but the only attention they had paid to the movement was to suppose they went to look to their horses.

As Robert came out, the pistols were knocked from his grasp, and while one of the troopers caught Clara and held her, the other three leaped upon him. With a power that somewhat startled the ruffians, the young Rebel broke from their grasp, and soon laid them senseless at his feet. But while he had been doing this, their companion had dragged Clara back into the kitchen.

At the first sound of alarm behind him, the old scout had turned; and upon the instant the sergeant, who had been looking for this movement, leaped forward, and struck him a blow that staggered him. And we have before said, this sergeant was a tall, stout fellow, and he seemed to understand the pugilistic art, for he followed his vantage quickly up, and with a second blow knocked the old man down.

•

Robert had settled the third man of his assailants, and turned just in season to see Karmel fall. He saw his sister being dragged across the kitchen by the man who had taken her from him; and without further thought he dashed forward. With one blow he knocked the ruffian down, and, on the next moment, he received a blow on the side of his own head that settled him upon the floor! Half a dozen of the troopers had sprung upon the scout and bound him—lashing his hands behind him with a stout kerchief, and securing his legs with the leather belt from his own waist.

Robert was quickly upon his feet, and with the fury of a madman he gazed about him. But what could he do? It was fifteen against one!—fifteen men, armed against one unarmed! They would not draw their pistols—for surely they would not have it said that they could not secure one young rebel. And yet they found it a harder job than they had anticipated. The youth sprang to his sister, and placed himself once more before her. The sergeant was the first to approach him, and while Robert's attention was turned to another assailant, he planted a blow upon his cheek that felled him to the ground, and thus the agonized brother was secured!

During all this time poor Peter Armstrong had stood by, with terror and agony plainly depicted upon his furrowed face, but utterly unable to give help. Had there been the least hope of final success, he would have joined the fight with right good will; for his fingers worked nervously, and his every look told that his blood was up. But he saw too plainly that there was no possible room for hope, for should it come to the use of arms the game would be quickly settled. He stood with his hands tightly clenched, and trying with all his power to hide his deep and bitter anger.

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked Clara, as the man who held her called upon one of his companions to come and bind her hands.

Robert heard the cry, and with one mighty effort he broke from those who held him. But his hands were already bound, and he could not free them. And this was his last effort on that occasion; for the sergeant, who was

still smarting under the pain of the blow he had received, darted forward, and gave him a blow upon the temple that felled him like a dead man. It was some minutes ere he moved, and for a while they thought him dead. Clara burst forth into an agonizing cry of terror, and even the old host manifested his feeling now, for he hastened forward and knelt down, and having raised the youth's head upon his knee, he began to chafe the bruised temple.

"I trust you don't sympathize with the rebel dog, do you?" the sergeant uttered, as he observed the old man's movement.

"But he may be dangerously hurt," returned Peter. "You don't want to kill him, now?"

"No—of course we don't. We want to see how he will look in our camp. But who is this other chap, Peter—this old rebel with the gray head?"

"I don't know, sir, I'm sure," replied the host. "They came here last night and asked for lodgings, and I gave it to them. They were cold and tired, and I asked them no questions."

"Say, old man, what is your name?" the officer asked, turning to the scout.

"My name is Martin Mayflower, sir; and I am a poor hunter, who tries to live and mind his own business."

"Then why didn't you mind your own business in this case?"

"I saw a poor girl in trouble."

"And so you thought you'd put in, eh? You'll get your head broken one of these days, for your pains."

"Martin Mayflower!" said the host, who fancied he might help Karmel on with his deception. "Oh—I remember you now. You are the one who shot so many deer last fall."

"Yes," returned the scout.

"By the great toe of Peter! I don't know about that!" interposed one of the troopers—one who had been watching the old man for some moments—and as he spoke he came up nearer, and gave a searching gaze into the scout's face.

Karmel betrayed no outward emotion at this, but the

quick eye of the host detected a shade upon his face—a sort of passing ripple over the lips, for both he and the scout had recognized in the inquisitive trooper a Tory who had formerly lived in that part of Jersey, and who had been over the country often as guide to marauding expeditions.

“What is it?” asked the sergeant, turning to his man.

“Did you ever hear of KARMEL, THE SCOUT?” the latter replied.

“Aye. Haven’t we all heard of him?”

“Well—*this is the man!*”

“This? Are you sure?” cried the officer, starting with excitement.

“He is the man, sir!”

The sergeant turned upon the old man, and gazed for some moments into his face without speaking.

“Aha!” he at length uttered, with a glow of triumph upon his dark face. “So we’ve trapped the notorious Rebel spy, have we?”

“That depends upon whom you call a spy,” coolly returned Karmel, having entirely regained his composure.

“Don’t swallow any of his blarney,” said the Tory. “He is the man—I can take my Bible oath of it.”

“We’ll take him to the camp, at all events,” returned the officer. “And if this morning’s work don’t make a lieutenant of me, then I’m much mistaken. I take in the colonel’s fair charmer; the notorious Rebel pirate; and the bold scout who has caused us so much trouble. By the powers, boys—a noble morning’s work!”

CHAPTER III.

IN A DARK PLACE.

EVEN had Karmel desired to resist his captors he was now placed beyond the power, for his arms and legs were so firmly secured that he could not break away. So he could only bow his head and study the theory of resignation. He knew that if he would hope for some future opportunity of escape he must be patient now; and he resolved

that nothing short of the most outrageous indignity should arouse him from his repose of temper.

But with Robert Pemberton the task was more difficult. For himself he had not now a single thought. His sister's fate was all that moved him. And it was a terrible theme to him ! That gentle sister was as the "apple of his eye" —as the very bond of his soul to love and duty. For a while after he had recovered from the effects of the sergeant's blow, he was like one bereft of reason. He saw his beloved sister bound before him ; and he knew that she was to be delivered up into the hands of a fiend ! He saw her weep, and he heard her groans of anguish and despair. And as he gazed around upon the hard-featured crew he knew that he had no hope in the present. At length he contrived to subdue the wild, frantic passions of his soul, and with his whole heart he prayed to God for succor !

The sergeant ordered the host's two boys to equip the Rebels' horses and bring them around to the door. This was promptly done, and then the prisoners were taken out. The old host ventured to urge that the maiden should be left with him ; but the officer had no idea of listening to anything of the kind.

"No, no," said the sergeant, turning to his corporal, "that will never do. If we carry the girl back we may be sure of some favor at the colonel's hands."

"Exactly," responded the corporal. "Egad, it's a good investment. It'll pay !"

And this was the whole secret of their anxiety to carry off the maiden. They cherished the selfish hope that from her return to their superior they should reap a rich reward. They were of those who would sell their own souls could they but have taken them back on lease while they were spending the proceeds.

The two Rebels were secured to their saddles, and would have been forced to ride so had not a majority of the troopers decided that escape was impossible. They were wholly disarmed, and the sergeant finally concluded to let them be free in their seats. The old scout managed to whisper to Peter to take good care of his rifle, which the host promised.

The last act of preparation was lifting Clara up in front of the sergeant ; and in a few moments more the party started off. Two of the troopers rode on in advance ; then followed the two Rebel prisoners ; then two more troopers, with their pistols ready for use at a moment's need ; then came the sergeant and his fair charge, and after him the remaining soldiers.

The wind had not blown much since the night before, and the track was open. The prisoners soon gathered from the remarks they occasionally caught from their captors, that the party had been out upon a sort of prospecting tour—searching out farm-houses and barns where a levy might be made for food for both horse and man.

Robert had found something beside the conversation of the troopers to interest him. There was a peculiar track in the snow that he was watching. It was a crooked track—like one made by a drunken man—and ever and anon he saw the marks left by one who had fairly sunk down from exhaustion. The track from these places, for a short distance, was wild and devious, as though she who made it had staggered fearfully ! The youth groaned deeply, and he could have wept outright had he been alone.

The ride was not a long one, and before the middle of the forenoon the party entered New Brunswick. The corporal proposed that they should carry their two Rebel prisoners directly to the quarters of General Howe ; but the sergeant said no.

“If we gain promotion from this,” he said, “it will be most likely to be through our colonel. So let's carry them directly to him.”

The corporal consented, and they took their way towards a respectable-looking house close by the river, where Col. Lyndarm had found quarters with Mrs. Nancy Reed. The matter stood thus : The house was to let, and the colonel hired Mrs. Reed to come to Brunswick and take it, and bring Clara Pemberton with her !

The sergeant knew his man well, for he had often been called upon to help minister to his superior's sensual appetites.

Col. James Lyndarm sat in his private room, and it re-

quired but a moment's look into his face to tell that he was troubled and angry. He was a tall, well-formed man, somewhere about five-and-thirty years of age, and possessed a face of remarkable personal beauty, only dissipation and the presence of wild and sensual passions had stamped it with that peculiar cast which at once causes distrust in the bosom of a true man, and fear in the soul of a virtuous woman. A dark mass of chestnut curls hung about his neck and temples, and his large, hazel eyes would have been rich and lustrous but for the effects of frequent visits to the wine-cup.

He had some papers before him which should have been examined ere this ; but he was in no mood for such work. He took one of them up and ran it over. It was a list of articles needed at once in the quartermaster's department. But he quickly threw it down and started to his feet, and was upon the point of commencing to pace the floor when a rap was heard at his door.

"Come in," he said.

The door was opened, and our acquaintance, the sergeant, entered.

"Ah, sergeant—is this you?" the colonel uttered.

"Yes, sir," the man replied.

"Well—what have you found?"

"We've found hay, and grain, and pork."

"That's good. Where is it?"

"Well—there's some only a few miles from here, at the first cross-roads ; and then there's more some four miles north of that."

"That'll do. You may go and tell the quartermaster of it. I'm in no mood for business just now. Tell him all about it, and have him state the force required to go and bring it off, and I'll send them off. Come—be off. What are ye waiting for?"

"Why—I've found something else, colonel."

"Something else? What do you mean?"

"We've found a pretty girl."

"Eh?—A pretty—Found a girl? Out with it!" the colonel cried, starting forward and grasping the sergeant by the arm.

"We've brought back a runaway—*Miss Clara Pemberton*."

"Ha! you have?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good on your head! Good, I say! But where did you find her?"

The sergeant thereupon related all the circumstances, so far as the girl alone was concerned.

"And she's here safe now, is she?" Lyndarm asked eagerly.

"Yes, sir. But that aren't all we've got."

"Ah, what else?"

"Did you know this girl had a brother?"

"Yes. My hostess has told me. He is captain of a Rebel cruiser."

"Well—We've got him."

"Got him? Got Robert Pemberton?"

"Yes, sir,—safe and sound."

"Good again!"

"And we've got something more."

"You haven't taken the Rebel army, have you?"

"Not quite, sir; but we've got a man that the Rebel army think much of. Don't you remember the fellow who betrayed us at Princeton, and who came so near taking Cornwallis prisoner?"

"You mean that man called Karmel?"

"Yes, sir. We've got him."

"What—here?"

"At your door."

"Good! By the rood, my noble sergeant, you shall be made a lieutenant for this. You shall."

"If I am, sir, you won't forget Goldby. He was with me."

"The corporal, you mean?"

"Yes, sir."

"He shall have your place. But, say—does the girl love this brother of hers?"

"Yes, sir. They worship each other."

"Good again. I'll make use of the fellow!"

This last was spoken with a gleam of triumph that might have made even a villain start.

"You may take the two Rebels to the officer of the guard, and tell him they are my prisoners."

"And the girl, sir?"

"Send her to Mrs. Reed."

Upon this the sergeant withdrew, and as the door closed behind him the colonel started across the floor.

"By the living saints!" he uttered, "this thing has worked well. I'll have a hold upon her now! If she loves this brother as I think she does, I'll make his safety my stepping-stone to her favor!"

And giving expression to this purpose Lyndarm sat down by his table, and rang a small tea-bell which stood near him. An orderly entered, and the colonel bade him send Mrs. Reed up.

In a few moments the hostess made her appearance, her face all smiles, and her body given to various and strange twistifications. She was a woman past the middle age of life; tall and gaunt; with a hard face, and a pair of cat-like eyes, that had a stubborn propensity of "looking two ways at a time."

"Well, madam," spoke the officer, "your fair charge has come back again."

"Yes, sir, and rather the worse for wear, too. I don't believe she'll try it again."

"Don't you? If you really think so, then you don't know her. She'd run if it fell snow like mountains. You must watch her more sharply hereafter, for you won't get the rest of your gold until she is most unmistakably mine."

"I'll look out for her now, sir. But you mean to marry her?"

"'With the left.'"

"'With the left'?"

"Yes. Don't you know what that means?"

"No, sir."

"Well—it means a kind of an accommodating marriage. I'll marry her to be sure; but I'll fix it that she sha'n't be prevented from leaving me when we get tired of each other. Do you understand now?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you needn't say anything of this to her."

"Oh!—of course not."

"You will have her nursed up as well as you can, and I will see her this evening."

"She got a terrible cutting up in the ice, sir."

"Yes—I suppose so. And I suppose, too, she feels rather bad at being brought back?"

"Why—as to that sir,—she don't seem to care for herself at all, what few moments I've seen her. She cared more for her brother. Oh, sir—she takes on dreadfully about him, I declare, I pitied her so that I told her you wouldn't let her brother be hurt."

"You did quite right, Mrs. Reed. If she says anything more about her brother, you may just assure her that he won't be harmed if she remains here with you."

"I'll tell her so, sir."

"Now go and see that she has such care as she needs."

With this the hostess departed, and Col. Lyndarm mustered up resolution enough to apply himself to his papers.

Beneath the building which had been occupied as a guard-house was a deep, strong cellar which had been divided off by strong partitions into cells. Within one of these sat the two Rebel prisoners. They were heavily ironed, the manacles of the hands and feet being connected by a stout chain; and every article save their clothing had been taken from them, even to Robert's ivory pocket-comb. The place was not so uncomfortable as might be supposed; for the cellar was so deep and well built that no frost could come in, and it was moreover dry, and of a pure atmosphere. There was a low platform in one corner with some straw upon it, which was meant for a bed; and for seats they had been provided with two blocks of wood. The only light came in through a number of small holes in the upper part of the partition, the window being in another part of the cellar. But this was sufficient to enable them to distinguish objects quite plainly.

"What is to become of us?" asked Robert, at the end of a silence which had lasted some minutes.

"I can't say certainly as to that," the scout returned. "All I can tell is, they will find little difficulty in proving me a spy."

"*A spy?*" repeated the youth. "But you have never been into the British camp before?"

"Not exactly; but I have broken up some dozen camps of Tories; and you may be sure they will visit their vengeance upon me. And then they know that I am the one that set the traps for Lord Cornwallis. But they can't make you out a spy."

"No," retured Robert, dubiously; "but I'm afraid they'll do something full as bad. They know I am commander of a Yankee cruiser; and I believe they hold all such as pirates. And then they must soon know that they have lost a most valuable store-brig; and they will probably know that I did the mischief. Ah, Karmel, our fates are fallen in a hard place."

"I believe you. But yet I do not despair."

"But you don't imagine they would let us off alive if they can help it, do you?"

"No—I do not. I think they will condemn us both to death. But there may be such a thing as escape."

"I know that," said the youth. "But I'm afraid escape will be difficult."

"It may be impossible;—yet we'll hope not."

Of course it was very pleasant to think of escape; but they who knew the character of the dungeon, and had the prisoners in charge, entertained no fears of any such event.

CHAPTER IV

CONDEMNED—A STRANGE RECOGNITION.

IN the morning, the Rebel prisoners had an apology for breakfast brought to them; but they were hungry, and as the food was not absolutely worthless, they ate it. Shortly afterwards a corporal and six soldiers entered the cell, and directed the jailer to take off the irons from their feet. This having been done, the two patriots were told to follow the officer. They were conducted to the street, and when they stopped, it was in front of a fine house, belonging to

a wealthy Tory named Lincoln. He was an English baronet once, and had been in America some eighteen years, and was still called "Sir Arthur."

Here sat an officer, in the middle age of life, habited in an easy, graceful undress, who had upon the table before him, a map of the Delaware River, with all the towns, and villages, and hamlets, correctly traced out. The moment the eyes of the old scout rested upon that map his countenance brightened, and a look of intelligence, which was not to be mistaken, rested thereupon. He knew very well that the course of the Delaware led to Philadelphia.

This officer, last spoken of, possessed a face of much personal beauty, and was, to all outward appearance, a gentleman; but there was a compression of the thin lips, a keen, restless flashing of the dark eyes, and a sinister frown upon the receding brow, which offered but little hope to an enemy. Such was Sir William Howe, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in the Colonies. By his side sat a secretary, who seemed to have been making some memoranda from the aforesaid map, at the dictation of his superior.

As the prisoners entered, the General moved his chair around from the table, and gazed into their faces. It was not a frown which settled upon his features, for that had already been there; but it was rather a look of combined hatred and fear, with a tinge of vengeance in it.

"These are the prisoners, General," said the corporal.

"Ah—yes—Rebel spies—I see."

"One is a spy, and the other a pirate!" interposed the officer who had followed the orderly to the door. "And very dangerous men they have been, too," he added, with a dubious shake of the head. "This old spy has done us much mischief; and the young pirate has done much more than he."

"Ha! He does not seem old enough to have done much," the General said.

"These Rebels breed mischief as naturally as rich old cheese breeds maggots," exclaimed the other. "Your excellency must remember that we were to have received some very valuable stores by the *Dunkirk* brig."

"Aye—I know. And she must be in soon."

"She *is* in, General; and her whole cargo is in the hands of the Rebel Washington ere this!"

"How?" exclaimed the Commander, starting to his feet.

"It is so, sir;—and it was this I meant to have told you last evening, when the entrance of company prevented me. Yes—the *Dunkirk* has been captured by the Rebels; and this young man is their chief!"

"Blood and fury!" gasped Sir William, starting about and facing the youth. "Is this true, sir?"

"I have captured a British store-brig, sir; and sent the stores to our patriot commander," replied Robert, in a calm, decided tone.

"And what authority had you for it?" asked Howe, sternly and threateningly.

"The same that any man has to protect his own God-given rights."

"There—we want none of your rebel cant."

"Then let's have no tyrant's questions!" quickly retorted Robert, stung to the quick by Howe's slur.

A dark, angry flush came to the General's face, but he suppressed the hot words that arose to his lips, and when he spoke it was with a look and tone of more than usual meaning and sinister motive.

"We'll soon show you the difference between being a rebel and being a loyal subject. By what authority did you sail, sir?"

"By the same authority that others sail. But if you ask me by what authority I took your brig, I should tell you that 'twas of my own desire."

"Then you had no commission from your Congress?"

"No written commission, sir; but I had the prayers of all true patriots; and so I had the verbal request of those who are now empowered to grant commissions. I had all the commission that could be given when I sailed, and I feel that I was as much an officer on duty in that affair as your own naval commanders are."

"Ah—you lower your tone a bit," said Howe, with a spice of irony. "You would sue for mercy, eh?"

"No, sir," the youth proudly returned. "I only claim the right which belongs to every prisoner of war."

"But a pirate cannot claim that. By your own showing you are only a freebooter. You had no legal commission."

"I hold a legal commission as Captain in the Colonial Navy sir."

"That won't save you. Your vessel had no commission. What did you sail in?"

"A small schooner, sir; and with two-and-twenty men. Surely you would not ask that such a craft, with such a crew, should be backed up by a commission, if she takes only heavy British brigs with double that number of men."

General Howe winced under this remark, but he tried to conceal his mortification.

"I understand your case, sir," he said; "and you may be assured that our laws won't be strained in your behalf. That will do for the present." Then turning to the elder prisoner he resumed:

"You are the notorious spy?"

"Call me what you please, sir, so that you do not call me a hireling of the British King," replied Karmel, with perfect coolness and freedom.

"Be sure we won't call you by so honorable a name, my dear pitcher," the General said, with a compression of the lips which gave the lie to the would-be easy smile he assumed.

"Of course people judge of honor by the position they occupy. The sheep-stealer feels proud of his name, and despises the man whose duty it is to hang him."

"You know how to be insolent, it seems," whispered Howe, between his set teeth, and tightly compressed lips.

"I know how to despise tyrants; how to hate their willing tools; and how to pity their credulous dupes."

"You do, eh? Very well. We'll see. Such feelings must be very unpleasant—are they not?"

"Not so unpleasant as tame submission to a tyrant's rule."

"Then we'll put you out of the way of both! You do not deny that you are a spy?"

"I do deny it, sir! I have never entered an enemy's

open camp as a spy. I have entered the secret meetings of traitors, sir! I have worked my way into the midst of plotting tories! And such I have delivered up to just imprisonment!"

"But you entered the British camp at Trenton!"

"Not as a spy, sir."

"But you were there?"

"Yes, sir."

"And again at Princeton?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you came very near taking Cornwallis a prisoner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we need not ask more. I think if one of my men were to be found in the Rebel camp, his neck would be stretched without much ceremony. A Spy and a Pirate! Pretty good work for one arrest. I will be frank with you, and then you'll know upon what to depend. From here you go to your prison; and at noon on the day after tomorrow you will both be hung! You need not beg, for not all the British prisoners in the Rebels' hands could save you! Take them away, sergeant."

Neither of the prisoners betrayed any unwonted emotion, nor did they seem inclined to speak; but with a calm, dignified silence they turned and stood ready to follow their conductor from the room.

At this juncture, while the sergeant was receiving some instructions from the afore-mentioned officer, a door close by where the General sat was opened, and the host, Sir Arthur Lincoln, entered. He was a tall, stately personage; not quite sixty years of age; and surrounded by an atmosphere of haughty pride when at ease. He had been in America, as we before stated, long enough to become one of the people; but he was a rank, uncompromising Tory—one who held the most firm faith in the "divine right of kings," and who looked upon all Rebels as only so many criminals who should be caught and hung. He was dressed with the most scrupulous nicety, and his garments were of superb fabrics.

"Ah, Sir Arthur," spoke the General, "you are just in

time to see two of the most mischievous Rebels we have ever caught. How is your good lady?"

"She is no better,—worse, if anything. But your Rebels—are these the men?"

"Yes. A spy and a pirate. We have been examining them a little."

Sir Arthur turned his gaze upon the prisoners as the General thus spoke, but their backs were towards him, they having faced the door.

"Look this way," the noble host commanded.

Robert Pemberton trembled slightly at the sound of that voice; but he quickly overcame the emotion, and then turned his head.

"Ha!" uttered the baronet, starting back. "Is't you? Is't Robert Pemberton?"

"I think you know me, sir," the youth replied.

"Aye," responded Lincoln, in a tone of extreme bitterness, "I do, most surely."

He gazed a few moments into the young man's face after speaking, and then turned his eye upon the scout.

"Who are you?" he resumed. "Just turn this way."

But Karmel did not obey. He stood very still, and though his features were stern and immovable, yet there was a perceptible tremulousness upon the whole frame.

"Will you show me your face?" spoke Sir Arthur, sharply.

Still the scout did not move, though the tremulousness increased. Those who noticed it thought 'twas the result of anger at thus being ordered by one who had no hand in his affairs.

"Sergeant!" thundered General Howe, stamping with his foot as he spoke, "turn that Rebel's face this way!"

But the sergeant did not have the work to do. As the order dropped from the commander's lips the old scout turned, and with flashing eyes, and lips compressed, he gazed into the face of the host.

"Sir Arthur Lincoln," he spoke, in a deep, strange tone, "look upon me. Look till you tire; and then say if I have not a wondrous face!"

A few seconds the baronet gazed into that dark, unshorn

face, and then he took a step forward and gazed more closely. Gradually the color left his cheeks; his lips turned to an ashen hue; and his frame quivered like an aspen.

"Have ye looked long enough?" asked the scout, as he saw the effect he had produced.

"Who are you?" the host gasped, in a hoarse whisper.

"Shall I tell you? Arthur Lincoln, shall I tell you who I am? The few words necessary to such a development can be easily and quickly spoken. Shall I speak them?"

"No! no!" the titled Tory uttered, at the same time making a motion as though he would stop the man's mouth if he attempted to speak to that effect.

The scout kept his keen gaze fixed upon the baronet for a few moments more, and then he said:

"Arthur Lincoln, you can be no more surprised to find me here than I am to find you in the same place. I knew not where you were until now. You must have lived very quietly. However, I shall not forget your abiding-place."

"Take them away!" cried Sir Arthur, nervously. "Take them off as quickly as possible!"

At a motion from the hand of the general the door was opened, and the two prisoners were led out into the hall, where the guard were in readiness to take them in charge. Ere long they were again in their dungeon, with the door securely bolted, and a sleepless sentinel on the watch without.

As soon as the prisoners had been taken from the apartment Sir Arthur went to one of the windows and looked out into a garden, full of snow. He remained there until he had overcome the strange emotion which had worked upon him, and then he turned and took a seat.

"General," he said, "who is that old Rebel?"

"All I know is, that he is called Karmel; and that he is a spy. He has given us much trouble."

"How? What sort of trouble?"

"Why—in various ways. First, he has betrayed some dozen newly-organized companies of loyal colonists who had made preparations to join our army. And then he has contrived to thwart several of our gangs that had been sent

out after provisions. He has done us injury in many ways. But tell me, Sir Arthur, what he is to—"

The general stopped, because his host made a quick, earnest motion for him to do so.

"I would speak with you in private a few moments," Lincoln said.

Thereupon Howe ordered his secretary and attendants to leave the room; and when the door was closed behind them, the host drew his chair close up to his illustrious guest.

"General," he said, having gazed carefully about, as if to assure himself that there was no hole or crevice through which his words could escape, "you may have noticed that both of the prisoners were known to me. As for that spy, I can tell you nothing. Yet, I will be frank with you—more so than I would be to any other living man. In days gone by that man crossed my path. I know you will ask me no more."

"Certainly not, certainly not," returned Howe. "I know that all of us have some little stories of the past laid away out of sight from the world. But what of the young man?"

"I'll tell you. His father was a friend of mine—or, I should say, an acquaintance—so our families were somewhat intimate. When this young fellow was about fifteen, or sixteen, perhaps, his father died. The mother had died a year previously. Thus Robert and his sister,—he has a sister named Clara, a girl some five years younger than he,—and thus the two children were left orphans. Perhaps you know Richard Pemberton?"

"Oh, yes—very well. He is one of our firmest friends," replied Howe.

"He is, certainly," resumed Lincoln. "Well—he was a brother of Robert's father; and after the latter died he took the two children beneath his own roof, and kept them until quite recently—say till within a year. They were both Rebels of the rankest kind, and he turned them from his house. He would not have them to contaminate his own children."

"And he did quite right," remarked the general.

"Of course he did," returned the host. "But the contamination had reached my house, however; and that, too, in a most dangerous shape."

"Ah!—how so?"

"Why—my daughter, Rosalie, had contrived to fall in love with the young Rebel; and she loves him yet. She is almost ungovernable. Richard Pemberton has a son—Elroy; perhaps you know him?"

"I have seen him; and a very fine-looking youth he is, too."

"So he is. And I have planned that he shall marry with my daughter; but while this Rebel cousin of his is in the way, she will not listen to the proposition. I think she would take her own life before she would be forced in this respect; though if Robert were out of the way, she would soon grow rational."

"Ah—I see," said Howe, thoughtfully. "Richard Pemberton is the uncle of this young Rebel."

"Yes," resumed Lincoln; "and, of course, Elroy is his cousin. Elroy is a good, firm Royalist, and will make an honored man; or—he is already an honored man; and it is my earnest desire to see him united to my child."

"Then I see not why your wish may not be gratified. If this young Rebel is in your way he shall not remain so much longer. He dies on the day after to-morrow!"

"Ha! Is it so planned?" cried the host, eagerly.

"Yes."

"And you won't let him off?—you won't let him escape?"

"No, sir!" pronounced the general, most emphatically. "They'll have to find some help higher than any power of earth if they would escape from their present prison."

"Good! And how about the other?"

"He—he dies, most unmistakably. No power can reverse his sentence."

"Then they are both sentenced?"

"Yes."

"But how do you find the sentence of death against Pemberton?"

"For piracy upon the high seas. He has taken one of our heaviest vessels, and killed several of the crew. He

had no commission, save a mere verbal permission from some one to rob our vessels."

"Ah!—then you have him safely enough. You know they must swing for it?"

"As well as I know that you now stand before me!"

"Thank you, General—thank you. With those two men out of the way, I am free, and my own master. You will be sure and let me know when they are to be executed."

"Yes. You wish to see them swing, eh?"

"Not that—not that, General. I wish to know that they *have swung*; and in no other way can I be so fully assured as by the evidence of my own eyes."

General Howe understood it now; and he promised his host that when the Rebels were hung, he "should be there to see."

CHAPTER V.

A MASK TORN OFF.

It was early evening, and Col. Lyndarm arose from his table and directed his orderly to prepare to accompany him to the quarters of the commander-in-chief. The attendant was soon ready, and they left the house together.

The occupant of the apartment had not been gone many minutes, ere the door was opened, and Clara Pemberton entered. She stopped a moment upon the threshold, but only long enough to assure herself that she was alone. The colonel had left his candle burning, and had taken no precautions to secure any of his effects—never dreaming that any one was to enter during his absence.

Clara was very pale; and though her face was still round and fair, yet she looked thinner than before. All look of fear was gone from her countenance, and a firm, determined expression had taken its place. Like a queen she stood there by the paper-strewn table. As she gazed about, her eyes flashed, and her full bosom heaved with the unwonted emotions within. She did not move nor act like one who

feared detection, for she felt no sense of wrong in what she was doing ; yet she was very careful, for much might depend upon the success of her mission, and she would not like to be thwarted.

First, she cast her gaze over the table ; but she found nothing there like what she sought. Next she went to the bureau ; but ere she had examined it her eye rested upon a small, inlaid escritoire, which stood upon the dressing-stand in the corner, and she went thither at once. The thing was not locked ; though if it had been it would have made no odds, for the key was in the lock ; and she opened it easily. She found several packages of letters, one of which immediately arrested her attention. They were bound together by a piece of blue ribbon, and very neatly arranged. One of these letters Clara pulled out and opened. She simply cast her eyes over it, and then re-folded it ; but instead of putting it back where she found it, she placed it in her bosom, and put the bundle in its original place minus one letter ; and having closed the escritoire, she left the apartment as noiselessly as she had entered it.

About one hour later, when the evening had well worn on, Clara heard a heavy footfall approaching her door. She knew very well who was coming, and for the moment she was paler than before, and much agitated ; but ere the door was opened she had gained control over her nerves, and her features were calm and dignified. Much of the palor that was upon her cheeks was the result of the fearful trials that she had undergone during her flight through the snow ; though her present position was calculated to beget anything rather than ease in her soul.

Soon there came a light rap upon the door, but the maiden did not speak. In a few moments it was opened, and Colonel Lyndarm entered. He bowed very politely, and assumed a very fair-looking smile.

"Couldn't you answer my first summons, Clara?" he asked, at the same time taking a seat near her by the fire.

"I knew it was you, sir, who knocked," she replied, calmly, "and as you are master here, I supposed you would come where you pleased."

"You are partly right, and partly wrong. I am master here, to be sure; but yet I might not go where I ought not."

"Then, sir, you would not now be here."

"Ah!—is this forbidden ground?"

"The apartment of a poor, defenceless girl should be sacred, at least in the eyes of a gentleman."

"By the rood, witch, you read me a pretty lesson. But I do hold your presence sacred. Thou art one of the things which are sacred in being devoutly loved. Do you see?"

"I will not affect ignorance, sir," the maiden frankly and sternly replied. "I do know what you mean; and let me assure you that I have the same confidence in your professed love that I have in the love of the lion for the lamb he would entice to his den—and no more."

"You are plain, my young lady."

"Because I wish to give you my feelings in as few words as possible."

"Ah—I understand. But suppose I were to tell you I didn't believe you?—which I most assuredly do not."

"You have already had my opinion of the worth of your assertions."

The colonel winced slightly beneath the look of deep contempt which accompanied these words; and very soon a close observer might have seen that he was beginning to grow angry. Yet he curbed his feelings, and when he spoke his voice was very calm.

"We have had enough of this profitless bantering, so we may as well come to some point of sense. You know I love you; and it is my earnest wish that you should be mine. You shall have everything that can tend to make you happy, and your every wish shall be as a law to me."

"Colonel Lyndarm," replied Clara, while the color flashed for a moment upon her cheek, "you insult me by your proposition. You know that I can never be to you more than I now am. I hope you will understand me, sir."

"I might allow the matter to rest here, did I not feel assured that you would alter your mind somewhat."

"Me?—Alter my—"

"Hold a moment, Clara. Hear me out before you speak.

You know I wish to make you my wife. I will place you in a position which cannot but honor you."

"Do you mean, sir, that you will make me your wife?" the maiden asked, at the same time casting a keen glance upon her companion.

"Of course I do," he promptly replied.

"Very well, sir. Now let me tell you that I will not be your wife!"

"Will not?"

"Never!"

"Not quite so fast, my dear girl. Have you any love for your brother?"

Clara started at this question and a fearful tremor shook her frame. She gazed into the colonel's face, and found his eyes fixed steadily upon her. The truth flashed upon her in a moment. She could read his meaning, and it fell upon her heart with a painful force. But the emotion soon became more settled, and again her features were calm and decided.

"I love my brother, sir," she said, more calmly than even she herself had expected, "and he loves me as well."

"Suppose it were in your power to save his life?" continued Lyndarm, in the same low, meaning tone, and with his eyes still fixed searchingly upon the maiden's face.

Clara felt the whole force of the bad man's meaning, and for the moment her heart was hushed with deadly fear. When she had regained her composure, she answered:

"I would to God that it were in my power, sir. Could my life purchase his safe delivery from the hands of his enemies, it should be freely given!"

"Do you mean that!" queried the man, incredulously.

"Aye. I would yield up my life with pleasure for such a purpose."

"Then let me assure you that your brother may be saved without any such sacrifice. Become my wife and he shall go free!"

"But have you the power, sir?"

"Of course I have," uttered the colonel, eagerly; for he thought the girl's question betokened a disposition to compromise.

"Ah, sir—I fear you deceive me in this."

"Deceive you?" cried Lyndarm, assuming a look of vast astonishment. "Do you for a moment imagine that I could speak a falsehood?"

"I feared you might deceive me in this, sir."

"No—never. I can save him. He has been condemned to die!"

"Condemned?" gasped the frightened girl. "But," she added in a moment more, "I knew they would do this. When have they set the time?"

"The day after to-morrow, at noon. Your brother, and the old spy who was taken with him, are condemned to die together, but I can save one of them."

"To die! To be hung!" murmured Clara to herself, trembling the while like an aspen. "Oh! they shall not murder him thus!"

"Say not so, lady. By the law of nations he richly deserves the fate. I do not mean that he has been guilty of great sin; but the law looks only to overt acts, and as such the deed of your brother ranks high in the scale of crime. Yet, as I said before, I can save him."

"But will you save him?" asked the fair girl, who had now overcome the outward show of her anguish, and was calm and determined.

"That depends entirely upon you, my lady."

"How so?"

"I will state the case plainly and fairly, and then you can judge for yourself. If you will be mine—be mine freely and fully—I will set your brother free."

"You know little of true love, sir, if you think such a proposition would be listened to by any true child of a patriot sire. My brother had far better die—die the death of torture most intense—than live to see his sister's shame! Aye, sir,—with this firm hand would I let his life-blood out, ere I would carry to him the terrible curse of a sister's everlasting infamy!"

The stout man quailed before the majestic gaze of the noble girl, and for a moment shame was plainly depicted upon his face; but, with a struggle, he regained his com-

posure, and then, with an abortive attempt at a smile, he said :

"Why will you so pervert my true meaning? Have I not told you that you should be my wife? What shame can there be in that?"

"Ah—but you would not make me your wife," returned Clara, with a look and tone that meant more than she spoke.

"I would! I swear it by all the powers of heaven!"

"And when I'm your wife you'll set my brother free!"

"Yes."

"He shall go at liberty? He shall live?"

"Yes. I swear it."

For some seconds Clara Pemberton gazed into the man's face without speaking. There were a variety of emotions manifest upon her features, the chief of which was contempt. At length she arose from her seat, and placed her hand within her bosom; and when she spoke, her voice was low, calm, and distinct, but very bitter and sarcastic.

"Colonel James Lyndarm," she said, "you have given me two promises, and bound both of them with an oath. You promise to set my brother free if I will be yours. How much power you may have to that end I know not; but I doubt your ability to set free one whom your commander-in-chief has himself condemned."

"Have I not given you my word? And is not that enough?" interrupted the colonel, rather sharply.

"We will come to the value of your promise very soon, sir," resumed Clara, in the same sarcastic tone, "If I will be yours, you promise to make me *your wife*—your legal, true wife."

"Aye—and I will."

"Can you do it, sir?"

"Can I?" uttered Lyndarm, trembling. "Can I?" he repeated, gazing earnestly into the fair girl's face, as though he could read her thoughts. "Why do you ask me such a question? Am I not my own master?"

"I will show you, sir," the maiden said; and as she spoke she drew from her bosom the letter which she had taken from his escritoire, and handed it to him. Her hand trembled as she did so, and there was a convulsive twitching of

the muscles of the lips; but beyond this she was calm and assured.

"That simple missive will tell its own story," she added, as she resumed her seat.

Lyndarm opened the letter, and glanced his eye over the page. His face turned pale, and his frame quivered. It was a letter from England, received only two weeks before, and written in a very neat, pretty, and lady-like hand. It was addressed to "*Col. James Lyndarm*," and signed thus :

"From thy loving wife,

"HELEN LYNDARM."

"Death and destruction!" gasped the exposed wretch, as soon as he could command his speech. "How came you by this letter?"

"I found it, sir; and I have seen its import. I have not read it—not one word, save the superscription and the signature. I have found how false you are, and how deep the shame you sought to work. Now, sir," the noble girl continued, rising to her feet, and gazing the man sternly in the face, "listen to me: Ere I will be yours—ere I will be to you more than I am now—I will take my own life!"

"You won't do any such thing," uttered Lyndarm, whose mind seemed for the while to be changed from the letter to meeting this determination of his intended victim.

"I shall do as I have said, sir."

"But your brother? Will you see him hanged!"

"Ha! Now you throw off the mask! You would use my brother for the purpose of my ruin!"

"Call it by what name you please," returned the colonel, who, now that he had been so fully exposed, threw himself directly back upon his power and cool villainy. "All is, I can save him; and I will save him upon the condition I have named."

"You have my answer, sir," Clara replied, now rendered fearfully calm by the, perhaps, fatal resolution she had taken. "I know what you thought when you entered upon this work. You thought I loved my brother so well that I would do your bidding to save his life. But, sir, you did not dream how deep in fact that love was; such as you

cannot conceive of an affection so pure and holy. Throughout all the realm of the fabled Tartarus, the gods of the infernal regions could not have found a curse that would be so terrible upon my brother as would be the shame of his sister! He would not suffer so much were he chained to the rocks of Mount Caucasus, and his vitals exposed to the ravenous beaks of starving vultures, as he would if he knew that he carried a life which had been bought with his sister's virtue and honor! No, no, sir,—the offer you make tempts me no more than would the offer of tinkling silver! Give him liberty, and perfect freedom from the sentence now passed upon him, and you may have my life in welcome. I mean what I say, sir."

Even James Lyndarm could not gaze unmoved upon that noble girl. He was not so dull but that he could see and appreciate her heroic devotion, though he had not soul enough of his own to be won by it from his villainy. He looked into her pale features some moments, and then he said:

"You will think better of this. I do not think you will see your own brother hanged, when you can prevent it."

"You know I cannot prevent it, sir; at least, not in the way you propose."

"Then you will not be my wife, even to save him?"

"Your *wife*, sir!"

"Aye—my *wife*. Since you have found this letter, I will tell you plainly, that I may have two wives."

"And one of them must be the thing of infamy!" quickly responded Clara. "No, sir; you can never bring me to your foul purpose."

"You think so, do you?"

"I do, sir."

"Then," said Lyndarm, starting up, and speaking between his clenched teeth, "we'll see! You are not free yet. You may be glad yet to sue for the place you now reject! You shall be mine! I swear it by all the hosts of heaven! Now rest you upon that assurance. The next time I come, it will not be as a supplicant. Mark that!"

Clara made no reply; nor did she even look upon the speaker. She bowed her head, and folded her hands upon

her bosom, and thus she remained until the villain had gone.

"If you *should* conclude to save your brother from an ignominious death, you can communicate with me at any moment."

With these words, the colonel turned from the room; but it was some moments ere Clara fully realized that he had gone. Her mind had been elsewhere.

CHAPTER VI.

A CONFERENCE.

WHEN Clara Pemberton recovered her scattered senses, and realized that she was alone, she started up from her seat and stood for some moments in the center of the room. There was a flush upon her cheek, and a strange light in her eye.

"Oh! Robert! Robert!" she uttered, in low agonized tones. "God help me in this great trouble! They must not—they shall not—murder you thus! While I live you shall have one heart beating for you alone!"

As she ceased speaking, she started to the window, and gazed out into the starless night. She could see the dark vault of cloudly space above her, and below she saw the white snow. She gazed awhile; and then turned back into the chamber. A tremulousness had come upon her cheek, and the light of her dark eyes grew deeper. There was a theme of more than ordinary import in her mind.

At length she sat down again, and having bowed her head upon her hands, she remained so for some minutes. When she again arose, she went to the closet, and took out the tinder-box, and having placed it beneath the window-curtain, she removed her upper garments and then prepared the fire for the night. Next, she extinguished the light, and then got into bed.

Half an hour after this Mrs. Reed opened the door, and

looked in. She heard the low, steady breathing of the girl, and of course supposed all was right. Without noise she closed the door, and passed on to her own chamber. It was now about nine o'clock.

When the clock, which stood in the sitting-room below, struck ten, Clara arose from the bed, and having found the tinder-box, she struck a light, and soon had her candle burning. She now drew on the only pair of shoes she owned, and with some listing stuff she bound them to her feet. Then she put on such clothing as she had at hand; and, thus prepared, she went to the door and listened. She heard no sound save the low moaning of the wind, and having become satisfied that she was the only one astir in the house, she turned towards the window.

She knew that there was a deep bank of snow directly beneath, so that there was not the slightest danger in leaping out, if ordinary care were observed. Noiselessly she raised the sash, and having placed her tinder-box where she could easily find it, she made preparations for regaining her chamber, in case she succeeded in performing her mission without detection. She knew that the two sheets, knotted together at the corners, were not only long enough to reach to the ground, but that she could easily climb up by them. But would it answer to leave them flying from the window? Of course not, for there might be people passing, and they would not only see them, but suspicion would be at once aroused. She hit upon a plan, however. In the closet was a ball of stout cord, or twine, such as is used for making heavy fish-nets. This she took, and having knotted the sheets together, and secured one end to the post of the bed, which stood within six inches of the window, she tied the twine to the other end, and then arranged it so that by the string the sheets could be pulled out by any one upon the snow outside. She then unwound enough of the twine to reach to the ground, and having so secured it that it could unwind no more, she threw the ball out.

Once more Clara examined the sheets, to assure herself that they could be easily pulled out, and then she put on her mittens, and returned to the open window. She listened a moment—then she uttered a simple prayer—and then she

got upon the stool, and leaped out into the deep snow. Awhile she floundered there, but at length she made her way to the road, and having shaken the snow from her head and shoulders, she hurried on.

The distance she had planned to go was not far, and when she stopped it was before the dwelling of Sir Arthur Lincoln. But how should she proceed now? She must see Rosalie—she must see her alone—else her mission would be fruitless. She knew where her friend slept, but how should she arouse her without also arousing those whom she did not wish to see? She stood there in the road, with the bleak, icy wind sweeping past her, and pondered.

Clara knew that Mrs. Lincoln was very sick; and, furthermore, that the good woman truly loved both her and her brother. There was a light in one of the chambers—it was probably the chamber of the sick woman.

“But stop,” uttered the shivering girl, as a new thought came to her mind. “Surely Colonel Lyndarm has not told them here that I am a prisoner. He would not dare to do it. They may know that he seeks to win me, but they know not that I am held in durance. Then what have I to fear?”

She wondered that she had not thought of this before, for it relieved her of nearly all her fear. Having been held by a superior officer within the British camp, it naturally appeared to her that the whole army would aid in securing her, as they would any other prisoner. But now she felt it to be otherwise, and with a bold step she advanced to the back-door—the door which opened into the L. Here she plied the knocker, and ere long her summons was answered by a woman whom she knew well—an old servant who had long been in Sir Arthur’s employ.

“Why—what on airth!” was the woman’s first exclamation, as she shielded her candle from the wind with her hand, and held it up so that its light fell full upon the visitor’s face. “Is this you, Clara? I hope to marcy you aren’t crazy.”

“No, Aunt Patience, I am not quite so far gone as that; but I am very cold,” returned Clara, shivering.

"Lord 'a' marcy, I should think you *would* be cold! Here—come right in."

The maiden followed the woman into the kitchen, where a small fire was burning, the latter having been engaged in preparing some warm drink for the invalid.

"Now, Clara," said Aunt Patience, as soon as the girl had taken a seat close by the fire, "tell me what on airth ye're come here for at this time o' night, and in such weather!"

"I have come for two purposes," returned the fair girl. "I came to see how Mrs. Lincoln was, and also to see Rosalie. I can see her?"

"Sartin ye can. She's up with her mother now; and when I go up I'll send her down. That'll do—won't it?"

"Certainly. And now how is Mrs. Lincoln? I heard she was very low."

"Ah," returned the old woman, with a dubious shake of the head, "she's poorly enough. She'll never get up from it—never. She's pinin' all away. There don't no medicine seem to help her any; and the doctor says she's past all hope. It seems hard—she's such a dear, good woman. But—she'll be better off—poor thing!"

There was something in the tone in which these last words were spoken that seemed to mean more than was said.

"What's it?" asked Clara. "Does she suffer more than sickness?"

Aunt Patience gazed carefully around, and then drawing her seat nearer to the young girl, she said, in a low, mysterious whisper:

"Of course you'll never lisp a word of what I say."

"You need not fear for me," replied Clara.

"I know'd you wouldn't say anything when you understood it. But I'll tell ye: Poor lady! she aren't treated just as she ought to be. It seems as though Sir Arthur didn't love her. He has grown cold and harsh; and then he don't smile upon her any more. And he don't love Rosalie as he ought to. He isn't kind to her at all."

"But why is this?" asked the maiden, in surprise.

"I don't know, unless it is because they both favor the Rebels. They aren't Rebels, Clara; they're right up an'

down Patriots. But, ye see, my lady and Rosalie both love the cause of the Colonies, and hate the British soldiers. Sir Arthur is right the other way. He is a rank Tory, and he hates everybody who don't agree with him. Why—if he know'd I was a Rebel at heart he'd turn me out of doors this very night !”

“I can't see how a man who meant to make this country his home can sympathize with tyrant rulers,” said Clara, feelingly.

“Nor I, neither,” responded Patience. “But,” she added, as she took the small saucepan from the fire, “I must go up now. I will send Rosalie down.”

The old woman took the broth she had prepared, and left the room, leaving the visitor in a thoughtful mood. But she was not left long alone, for in a very few moments the door opened, and Rosalie Lincoln bounded into the room.

The new-comer was a beautiful girl ; full and plump in form ; and so nearly did she resemble Clara that she had not only often been taken for her sister, but some had even thought them twins. They did look very much alike. Both had the same full form ; both the same fair, delicate skin ; the same sweet features ; the same dark, hazel eyes ; the same silky, wavy, brown hair ; the same full brow, and the same laughter-loving dimples, about which clustered genial smiles when they were happy.

Rosalie rushed forward and clasped the orphan to her bosom.

“Dear, dear Clara,” she murmured, “I am so glad to see you.”

“And I am glad to see you, Rosalie,” the other replied, as she kissed her friend's cheek.

“Oh ! I have been looking for you this long while,” Rosalie resumed. “I have not heard from Robert. I dare not ask any of my folks. Have you heard from him ?”

“Yes,” returned Clara, trembling. “I have heard from him this very evening ; and yesterday I saw him—I was with him.”

“You tremble, Clara. Something has happened. What is it ? Oh ! what ? Is he in danger ?”

"He is in prison—in prison here in this town. Stop. Hear me through. He captured a British brig—a heavy vessel loaded with arms, ammunition and provisions for the English army—and sent all the things to General Washington for our own suffering troops."

"Oh, noble, good, brave Robert!" interrupted Rosalie, enthusiastically.

"He did this, and was on his way to find me, when he was captured by the British; and he's now in prison, and sentenced to death!"

"No!" gasped Rosalie, seizing Clara by the arm and gazing half wildly into her face. "Not sentenced to die! Oh, no—they have deceived you."

"Listen, Rosalie, and I will tell you all." And thereupon Clara related to her friend the story of her flight from Lyndarm—the meeting with the soldiers at the house of Peter Armstrong—the intervention of Robert and the scout—and the final overcoming of all three of them.

"Robert and Karmel were brought here, before General Howe, this morning; and they were both sentenced to die! I am not mistaken, Rose. Oh! he will be hung if we cannot save him!"

Rosalie Lincoln had become very pale, and her heart seemed for the while to have suspended its motion. She gazed steadily into her companion's face for some moments; and when she spoke her voice was painfully low and earnest.

"You are not mistaken," she said. "I heard that two Rebels had been condemned this morning; but little did I think who they were. Robert shall not die—not while I have life. But tell me of Colonel Lyndarm."

In as few words as possible Clara told the story of her persecution at the hands of the Colonel.

"But let him go for the present," she added. "I can flee from him when the time comes; but I can not do it while Robert is here. I shall return to-night—I must—else suspicion will be aroused. Oh, if you can help my brother in any way! I knew your father had some power; and I—"

"Hold, Clara. From my father I can gain no help in such a work. But I can do something."

"If they would exchange him for me," said the faithful sister, earnestly. "I would die willingly to save him."

"They shall not have either of you, if I can help it," replied Rosalie, at the same time throwing her arms about Clara's neck, and kissing her again. "You cannot love him better than I do."

"I—I—"

"What is it?"

"Never mind now."

"Yes. Tell me. You were going to say something. What was it?"

"You will forgive me?"

"Of course."

"Well—I was going to ask you if you were not engaged to marry with Elroy."

"Marry with Elroy Pemberton?" cried Rosalie, most bitterly. "Not while I have life and reason! My father has sworn that I shall be his wife; but I can not—I will not. I love Robert—and Robert only. I tell you plainly, for you should know it already, I will marry with Elroy when you become the willing love of James Lyndarm. Be assured it will not happen before."

"Oh!" murmured Clara, pillowing her head upon Rosalie's shoulder, "shall we ever again be the happy beings we were in childhood!"

Those words were simple; and the question was not strange, yet the effect upon both the girls was deep and powerful. We have already had a hint of Rosalie's domestic sorrows, and we know the other cloud that hung over her way. She burst into tears, as the utterance fell upon her ears, and with a spasmodic effort she clung more closely to the speaker. And Clara wept—wept freely and unrestrainedly.

Those two pure beings had the same sympathies at heart, and their thoughts ran back upon the past in nearly the same channel. They remembered the bright, sunny days, when time flew by on golden wings, and when the sands of

their glass were "diamond sparks that glittered as they passed." Then all was joy and gladness ; and they only looked forward to the future for the consummation of bright promises.

Ah ! should they ever be so happy again !

Clara was the first to speak. She said she must be on her way soon, for she wished to regain her room without exciting suspicion.

"Then you will return?" asked Rosalie.

"How can I help it? I cannot remain here, for your father would not permit it. I can find no home in New Brunswick save the one I now have. I must stay there at present—till—till—Robert is free."

"You shall see him free. I will stake my life upon the result."

At this juncture Aunt Patience returned and informed Rosalie that her brother wished to see her.

There was a warm embrace—a fervent kiss—a simple God's blessing—and then the poor wanderer turned away, and was once more in the street. With quick steps she hastened on, and soon stood beneath her own window. The wind was blowing, and the snow flying in circling eddies about the house ; but Clara took no notice of it. The excitement of the occasion kept her blood coursing freely, and she felt not the cold. She easily found the ball of twine, and as easily pulled down the sheets.

The adventurer waited a few moments to collect her strength, and then she began the ascent. It was hard work for one not used to efforts of the kind ; but she was resolute, and the way was slowly gained. The wind came upon her with driving power, and as she swung to and fro—now out—now in—now whirling one way as the sheet twisted, and anon revolving in the opposite directing—she had to put forth all the power she could command. But at length she grasped the sill of the window, and in a few moments more stood within her chamber. No one had been there—she had not yet been detected. And the wind which had handled her so roughly during her ascent, was at the same time hiding the tell-tale tracks she had made in the snow.

The sheets were drawn in, the window closed ; and then, without noise, the shivering girl raked open the embers and sought to warm her benumbed fingers.

It was past midnight when Clara Pemberton laid her head upon her pillow ; but it was later still ere she slept, for there were heavy thoughts in her bosom, and her soul was moved by doubts and fears which hope could not remove.

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE AT WORK.

As soon as Clara had gone Rosalie returned to her mother's chamber. Ellen Lincoln was upon her bed, and it required but little knowledge of physiological science to enable the beholder to decide that she would never leave it until her soul was called home to Him who created it. She was very pale—pale as the purest marble—and her features were wan and wasted. Still there was a marvelous beauty gleaming from her countenance. There was a soft, heavenly light of the dark, lustrous eye, and an atmosphere of more than ordinary purity, dwelling about her face. Yet she suffered much, and at times there was perceptible about her lips a struggling emotion, as though thoughts dark and painful were at work within. She often appeared thus, and others had noticed it. Her daughter had seen it, and she thought 'twas the result of some cruel treatment at the hands of her father.

"You have been gone long, my child," said Mrs. Lincoln, turning heavily upon her pillow, as her daughter entered.

"I have had a visitor, mother—one whom we both love and respect."

"Ah—"

"It was Clara Pemberton."

"Clara?" uttered the invalid in surprise. "Why was she out on such a night?"

"I think I may tell you," Rosalie replied, drawing a chair close to the bed and sitting down. "Her brother has been arrested by the British, and is now in jail. And he has been sentenced to be hanged on the day after to-morrow!"

"Hanged! Robert Pemberton to be hanged!" cried the mother, starting up to her elbow, but quickly sinking back. "Oh, they cannot do such a thing!"

"Ah, my mother, you do not know them yet. Hanging such effective patriots is just what suits them."

"But Robert must not die!" Mrs. Lincoln uttered, speaking as one who had a deep feeling in the matter. "Oh, we must do something! What can it be?" She covered her face with her thin, transparent hands, and for some moments remained in deep thought. When she again looked up there was an eager, earnest expression upon her features, and her voice was stronger than before:

"We can not gain any help from your father, for he is Robert's most bitter enemy. And of course we can do nothing with Sir William Howe. What shall we do?"

"Something—something," murmured Rosalie, trembling. "I may save him. Oh, if I could gain access to him!"

"Perhaps you can do that."

"But how?"

"Does not Sir William ever leave blank orders upon his table? Or may not Major O'Harra give you one?"

"I forgot him," said Rosalie, hopefully. "I think he will." She pondered upon the subject a few moments, and then started to her feet. There was a new light upon her face, and her hands were clasped nervously together; and having walked quickly across the room, and back again, she resumed:

"I am almost sure he will give me the permission. I know he has the power, for I saw him only a few days ago give a permit to an old man to visit his son who was in the jail. I will ask him. Oh, I know he will not refuse me!"

"But when will you visit him?"

"Robert, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"Let me think. There is a plan half-formed already in my mind."

Rosalie sat down as she spoke, and for some minutes not another word was spoken.

"Mother," she finally said, with a nervous earnestness, "there are British uniforms here in the house. I know where they are, too. They were brought here a week ago—condemned, because they were moth-eaten. Let me leave you for a few moments?"

"Certainly. But be careful."

"Fear not on that account."

Thus speaking the maiden took the candle and left the room. With noiseless steps she ascended to the large, unfinished garret, where, in one corner, lay a lot of condemned clothing. There were coats and breeches, and some old belts and fatigue-caps. Rosalie set the candle upon the floor, and then overhauled the heap. She selected two coats, taking care that they should be large enough; and also two pairs of breeches. Then she took two belts, and two caps; and having rolled up the articles thus selected, she put them under her arm; and then taking up the candle she returned to her mother's chamber. Hope was high now; and when she finally lay down by her mother's side, which she did after she had concealed the clothing and fixed the fire, she felt a wild thrill of promise in her bosom.

On the following morning Rosalie was early astir, her mother having slept well since an hour past midnight. As soon as Patience came up she went down and ate her breakfast, and then went into the front hall, where she hoped to meet Major O'Harra when he came in. He did not lodge in the house, but spent much of the day-time there with the commander-in-chief. It was very near his usual time for arriving, and Rosalie resolved to remain on the watch for him.

And she had not to watch long, either; for in a few minutes the major made his appearance.

"Ah—good morning, Miss Lincoln," he said, rubbing his fingers smartly. "This is cold weather—cold enough for any Laplander in creation,"

"It is very cold, sir," returned Rose. "I hope you are well, sir."

"Very well."

"And in good humor, too."

"Eh? What's coming now?"

"I'll tell you plainly, sir," said the fair girl, speaking frankly, and without perturbation. "I wish to visit the prison."

"Aha? That's it, eh?" retorted the officer, with a smile. "I hope you have no particular affection set upon any one there."

"Only this, sir: There is one confined in your prison who was my playmate in childhood, and whom I would see before he dies. And more than that: He has a sister who would send a word of love."

"You allude to Robert Pemberton?"

"Yes, sir."

"When do you wish to see him?"

Rosalie hesitated. She had planned to go in the evening; but she feared it might excite the major's suspicion if she mentioned so unseemly a season. He helped her out, however,—and much to her satisfaction, too.

"I asked," he said, "because I didn't know but that you might wish to go immediately. But if you could put it off till evening I will give you a pass with pleasure. We have about concluded not to grant any more permits. There are so many visitors that it makes trouble. However, if you can wait till evening, when you will not be so generally observed, you shall have it."

"Certainly, sir," replied the maiden. "I only wish to see him, and converse with him a few moments; and this evening will answer as well as any time."

"Then you shall have a permit. But you must let me gain one promise: You will not make it known that you received it; for we refused quite a number yesterday."

"You may rest assured of that, sir. I have reasons of my own for wishing the thing kept secret."

"Ah—yes—I understand. You would not wish to have people know that you visited a condemned Rebel. I don't blame you."

Under other circumstances Rosalie might have resented this assumption, and plainly stated her appreciation of the youth's worth; but it was not for the interest of him whose welfare she sought.

"When may I have the pass?" she asked.

"I will hand it to you this noon. You meet me here, and I will hand it to you."

Rosalie was about to turn away, when another thought arose to her mind. She stopped and looked once more into the major's face.

"I understand the two Rebels are to be hanged," she said, very calmly.

"Yes, Rose. They die to-morrow at noon."

"It is fixed, then, is it?"

"Certainly. Don't you think it right that such dangerous persons should be put out of the way?"

"Of course we all have a right to protect ourselves from danger, sir."

"That's it, lady. You take a common-sense view of the matter. Be here at noon, and you shall have the pass, Come when you hear the clock strike twelve."

The maiden said she would, and then turned away.

"I wonder if he thinks that British soldiers and Tories are the only ones who have a right to protect themselves from danger," she said to herself as she ascended the stairs. At all events, she held no such opinion.

During the afternoon Rosalie remained with her mother, who was very weak and faint.

"My child," the sick woman said, as she turned upon her pillow after a long season of thought and reflection, "what do you think you will do when I am taken from you?"

"But you are not going to be taken from me at present, mother," the girl returned, more in a tone of pleading than of earnest assurance.

"Ah, Rose—you mustn't flatter yourself so. I must leave you, and we may as well be resigned first as last. I have no fear of death. I have no desire to live, beyond

your good. Were it not for you I should hope the dark angel would come soon. But for your sake I would live if I could. Yet I feel that I am going—going more rapidly than we have imagined. I shall not be with you much longer. Now tell me what you will do when I am gone.”

“What would you have me do?”

“But have you never thought of it, Rose? Have you not reflected upon the subject?”

“Yes, mother—I have.”

“And what were your thoughts?”

“I don’t know as I could tell you, clearly. They were a mixture of hopes and fears. Of course you know my whole heart, with all its love and hope, is set upon Robert. He is all in all to me—I mean next to you, my dear mother.”

“I understand you, my child,” replied Mrs. Lincoln, reaching forth and taking her daughter’s hand in her feeble grasp. “And thus far you have touched my own hopes. The time was when I might have held it a sin to speak to you as I must now; but circumstances are imperative. You know the feelings of your father toward both you and myself. He cares not for our love, and at times I fear he loves us not. I know he means that you shall marry with Elroy Pemberton. He knows the young man’s character—he must know it. He must know that Elroy is a reckless, dissipated man, and that in many things he is far from being honorable or virtuous. It is notorious that he has wrought the ruin of several poor girls; and yet Sir Arthur upholds him, and would make him your husband. We cannot, at such a time, hide these things; and I should be very unhappy if I felt that you were to be the wife of such a man.”

“You need have no fear on that account,” said Rosalie, firmly, “for I will never consent to such a thing—never. No power on earth shall make me wed with Elroy Pemberton. I am pledged to Robert, and I love him most fondly. If I cannot wed with him I will live no base lie by giving my cold, loveless hand to another.”

“You are right, my child. Oh! would to heaven I had

the power to provide for your future welfare. Could I leave you in Robert's care I should go to sleep in perfect content and—"

The invalid stopped—a shudder passed through her wasted frame, and a look of pain came upon her face.

"I should be happier then than now," she added in a low, tremulous tone.

"Do not allow this to weary you, mother," urged the faithful child. "I shall look out for myself. If I can save Robert from the terrible fate that now hangs over him, I feel assured I can gain the rest."

Mrs. Lincoln seemed upon the point of replying, but she hesitated, and faintly closed her eyes. It was evident that she wished to speak upon some subject, but feared so to do. She remained thus silent for some time; and when she again looked up she said:

"We will speak of this again. I have much to say to you, but I will not say it now."

"Is it important, mother?" asked Rosalie.

"Yes, my child."

"Then why not not speak now? You may never have a more fitting opportunity."

"Not now, Rose."

"Yes mother—now. Why put it off? You may not—"

The girl hesitated, but her mother went on:

"I know what you would say, my child. You fear I may die without revealing the subject of which I speak. But you need be under no such apprehension. I shall know when my life-tide runs low. There will be no sudden convulsion; but I shall gradually wear away as I have been doing for years!"

"How? For years?" exclaimed Rosalie, in astonishment.

"Alas! I will not recall the words, though I meant not to have spoken them," said the invalid sadly. "It is true I have been wearing away for years! My soul has been the constant abode of a cankering grief, and my heart has lain beneath a weight of remorse that has well nigh crushed it! Remember my words, for at some time you shall know their meaning; though not while I live."

Rosalie had started to her feet, and she now stood like one terror-struck. At first she almost feared that her mother's reason was wavering ; but when she marked the calm, deep grief that dwelt upon her pallid features she knew there must be some fearful meaning in the strange words she had heard. Had her parent been stronger she might have urged her further, but she would not do so now.

The maiden was upon the point of resuming her seat when she heard the clock strike. She had kept no account of the time, so she listened attentively to the stroke of the bell. It struck twelve times.

"I must leave you a moment," she said to her mother.

"You may go ; but you will not be long away."

Rosalie promised to return in a very short time, and then left the room. She reached the hall just as Major O'Harra was coming out.

"Ah—here you are," he said, at the same time drawing a paper from his waistcoat pocket. "Here is your pass ; and I trust you will make good use of it."

"You may be assured of that, sir," the fair girl replied.

"I do not doubt you. All you need to do is to hand that to the officer on guard, and he will at once send a man to show you the way, or else go himself. At what time shall you go?"

"Perhaps not before eight o'clock."

"That will answer very well. At eight o'clock a very accommodating man will be on guard. I trust you will have much joy of your visit."

"I shall be satisfied that I have done my duty, sir."

"That's a laudable satisfaction, truly. Good-day."

"Good-day ; and many thanks, too, sir."

"You are welcome."

With this the major turned towards the outer door, and Rosalie returned to her mother's chamber. She was very nervous, for hope and fear were struggling almost wildly for the ascendancy in her bosom ; yet she tried to assure herself that all would be well.

Evening came, and as the moments dragged heavily away, the maiden tried to still the tumultuous beatings of her heart. Ever and anon she would start up from her

seat and pace to and fro across the room ; then she would resume her seat and take a book. But she could not read.

At length the appointed hour was at hand. The sick woman slept, but she knew that her daughter was going, so Rosalie did not awaken her. She called Patience to come and sit by the bed, and then she went to her room to make preparations for her mission.

The task she had taken upon herself was one of more than ordinary magnitude for one in her position ; but she quailed not. In a work upon the result of which she would have staked her life, she felt nothing of hesitation. She only prayed to God for strength and guidance ; and for the rest she looked to her strong love for him whom she would save.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ANGEL OF HOPE.

ROBERT PEMBERTON and his companion sat in their low, dark cell, listening to the voices of the night. The wind sounded a mournful requiem over the burial of their hopes ; the slow and measured tread of the sentinel could be heard ever and anon above them ; and the occasional clanking of their heavy chains broke upon the air to give variety to the dull, ungrateful music. They had eaten their supper, and the first guard of the night had looked in upon them to see that all was safe.

It was utterly dark in that prison cell. Not one particle of light could enter. The eye received no impress at all—open or closed, it was all the same. And then it was cold there, too. At first, when the prisoners had been brought in from the keen, freezing atmosphere of the upper earth, the place had seemed quite comfortable, but a long stay there, without exercise of any kind, had given a chill to their frames, and their blood was becoming sluggish in its movement. Could they have had the privilege of using their limbs freely, or could they have had a warm bed,

they might have been comfortable enough ; but their bed was only a heap of dirty straw, and upon their limbs were secured heavy chains. Death would have been preferable to a long imprisonment such as this.

It is one of the most difficult things in our thoughts of the American Revolution, to reconcile the treatment which the Patriot prisoners received with the general character of the English people. It is notorious that no prisoners of war ever suffered more than did the prisoners of the British during that war. They did not seem to regard the captured Americans as human beings at all. Their prisoners were not only crowded away into the holes and dens where humanity could not survive, but they were often fed upon stuff that even a carrion crow might have rejected. In summer time they were jammed into sweltering, reeking pest-houses, and in winter they were left to freeze and to starve ! Often, it is true, this was in a measure owing to the avaricious cruelty of individuals ; but still the leaders could have applied the remedy had they seen fit. The darkest pictures of that memorable struggle, next to the brutal ravages of some of the inhuman soldiers, were the scenes that transpired in the British prisons. The old "*Jersey Prison-ship*" will be a theme of horror as long as history endures ; and as a picture of all that is cruel and heartless, in war or in peace, the earth cannot furnish anything to take precedent of it !

There were others in that prison at Brunswick, who suffered more than Robert and Karmel. There were men on the floor above them—confined in rooms where water froze quickly, and heavily chained at that ! There had been corpses taken from that prison-house, and 'twas said they died of disease. But those who knew best knew that they had been cut down in their full powers of health by the cold. They had frozen to death !

Once Robert had asked if they could not have a warmer bed. He was answered that he had better consider himself lucky that he had not already frozen to the heart, as others had done, who had not so warm a place as he had.

"This is our last night !" said the youth, as he heard

the chains of his companion rattle with a movement of the body.

"Yes," replied the scout. "We shall soon be free from this scene."

"I have been in unpleasant positions before," resumed Robert, "but never where hope did not hold out some thought of escape. There is no such thing for us."

"Save by a miracle."

"And we may as well be assured, first as last, that no miracle will be wrought in our behalf. Others are dying about us, and why shall not we."

"We must, I suppose," said Karmel, resignedly. "I could die with a good relish if I had seen the tyrant's hirelings driven from our soil! Oh! could I but hear the song of victory—could I see the British lion cower away to his ocean-bound lair, and know that the Colonies were free—I should die content. I would not ask them for life."

Robert was upon the point of replying, when a footfall was heard near the entrance to their cell. In a few moments more the heavy bolts were drawn, and the door was opened. For a while the light came so powerfully upon their distended pupils that they were utterly blinded; but soon they were able to see more distinctly, and upon gazing up they beheld the sergeant of the guard, and with him was a man in the uniform of a British major. It was Major Clondel, an officer of some note as an engineer, and attached to the staff of the commander-in-chief. He bade the sergeant set down the candle and withdraw; and when he had been obeyed in that, he turned towards the prisoners.

"Well, my men—you have rather a cold place here," he said.

"We discovered that some time since," was Karmel's laconic reply.

"Who are you?" the major asked, taking a step nearer to the scout, and gazing earnestly into his face.

"I am a man, as you see, sir; and have been apprehended as a spy," calmly replied Karmel.

"We have met before. Surely I know that face. Where is it we have seen each other?"

"Perhaps in many places. But there can be no great benefit in raking up the dust of the past ; and even if there were, methinks George Clondel need not wish to lay his past history open to the world."

"Ha ! you know me then ?" uttered the officer, with a sudden start. "By the hosts of Pluto, I should know your face. Will you not tell me who you are ?"

"I tell thee, sir major, we may have met in a hundred places. But let that pass now. I am nothing to you in any way or shape. And now out with your business."

Clondel hesitated a few moments, and during that time he gazed fixedly into the old man's face. But finally the eager expression was subdued, and then he said :

"I have come upon a very important matter. You are of course aware that you are sentenced to die to-morrow noon ?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you must be also aware that no ordinary circumstance can prevent your sentence from being carried into effect ?"

"We have made up our minds to that end, sir. Had we been promised our liberty, we might have doubted it ; but we do not doubt that you mean to hang us."

"You are very acute in your discernment," said the major, with a spice of sarcasm in his tone. "But let me ask you an important question : would you not like to live ?"

"We should, most assuredly," was Karmel's quick reply.

"Then you have the opportunity."

"Ah !—how ?"

"Listen ! if you have a fair degree of understanding you must see two things. First—that the cause in which the Rebel Colonists are engaged is a bad one. They are openly in arms against their lawful and legitimate king ; and second—that they cannot succeed in their present undertaking. This is plain."

"Well, sir—go on."

"What I have to offer is this : if you will renounce all connection and sympathy with the Rebels, and join the forces of the king, you shall not only be pardoned, but you

shall have offices of honor bestowed upon you. What say you ? ”

“ Let my companion answer you,” said Karmel.

“ Of course. I wish an answer from you both.”

“ His answer will do for me, sir.”

“ Well—let’s have it,” resumed Clondel, turning to the youth.

“ I can answer you in a very few words,” replied Robert, proudly. “ Were we nothing but machines, fashioned for the use of kings and lordly rulers, without souls, and destined to pass away into annihilation, like a piece of curious machinery, we might listen to your proposition. But you are wrong at every point. First, the Colonists owe no allegiance to a government in the administration of which they can have no voice whatever. And secondly, they will be as sure to drive you from their soil as the sun is sure to rise again. Could you dethrone King George, and place me upon his royal seat, I would not listen to your proposition ! We can die—but we cannot be traitors ! ”

“ That’s it,” uttered Karmel.

“ Don’t you think you can change your minds a little upon reflection ? ” the officer asked.

“ But really, sir,” suggested Robert, “ do you feel sure that you can overcome the Patriots ? ”

“ Overcome them ! ” repeated Clondel, with a disdainful toss of the head. “ How can we help it ? We are as sure of it as we are of the presence of winter at this present time.”

“ Then of course you cannot want our assistance,” the youth retorted ; “ and you will both show your good sense and relieve us by dropping the subject. Ere we would turn traitors to the holy cause of liberty, we would die an hundred deaths ! ”

The major was rather nonplussed by this, and after pondering upon the subject a few moments he said :

“ Very well. If you choose to die, so be it. I had hoped you might choose to live. You are engaged in a hopeless cause, and one which must eventually make the situation of the colonists worse than it has ever yet been. However, I will say no more at present. If you wish to

see me before noon to-morrow, you can easily send for me. Good-evening."

Thus speaking the officer turned from the cell, and in a few moments more the door was bolted, and the prisoners were once more alone.

"Ah," said Karmel, "they are in a hard place. They need more men. They supposed at first that an army of a few thousand men could sweep through the Colonies; but they have found their mistake."

"Let's see," returned Robert; "did not one of the British generals write home something to that effect?"

"Yes—I think so. At all events, it was publicly announced in Parliament, that five regiments of their troops could march from one end of the continent to the other. They said the colonists were but mere clowns, and could only get up a mob at the best. But they've found out their mistake. When an enemy comes to offer pardon to its most dangerous foes, they must be poorly off."

"Yes, yes," murmured the youth, thoughtfully. "But yet, Karmel, I wish we could live to strike a few more blows. To die is nothing, if one dies decently; but to be cut off when our country needs us so much. Oh! if I could only make one more cruise I'd come back, and give myself up."

At this point, the call was passed overhead for the relief of the guard, and the prisoners knew it was eight o'clock. Half an hour must have passed away after this, when they again heard a footfall near their door.

"Who can that be?" said Karmel. "That major is not coming back, is he?"

"I don't know. This is not the hour for the visit of the guard."

Before Karmel could speak, the door was opened, and the sergeant made his appearance. He was followed by a female form, muffled up in a long cloak.

"Here is a visitor for Robert Pemberton." And thus speaking, the sergeant set down his candle, and then withdrew.

As soon as the door was closed, the visitor threw back

the hood from her face, thus revealing the features of Rosalie Lincoln !

"Robert," she said, in a low, spasmodic whisper, at the same time casting a searching glance upon his companion.

"Fear not for Karmel," the youth uttered. "He is my true friend, or he would not have been here now. 'Twas his helping me that cost him his liberty."

As he spoke, he made an effort to raise his hands and open his arms, but the heavy chains prevented him. Yet Rosalie saw the movement, and as she comprehended its meaning, she sank upon his bosom, and clasped her arms about his neck, where she wept in the fullness of her sympathetic grief.

"This is not your sister," said the scout, gazing eagerly into the maiden's face, after she had raised her head from her lover's shoulders.

"No—no," returned Robert, still holding one of Rosalie's fair hands in his grasp. "This is one whom God has given me to love with a far different emotion—one in whom are centered all the hopes and aspirations of my soul."

"It is Rosalie Lincoln?" the old man added.

"Yes—the daughter of Sir Arthur," responded Robert.

"Fair lady," spoke Karmel, with a slight tremulousness in his voice, and at the same time taking one of her hands, "I am glad to see one whom my friend loves, and who loves him in return. May God bless you ever, and lead you free from all temptation and suffering !"

There was a bright tear in the old scout's eye as he ceased speaking ; and Rosalie felt his hand tremble perceptibly. She gazed fixedly into his face, and as she met the warm, fond glance of his mild, bright eye—mild now that his soul was attuned to love—she felt a thrill of something very much like affection starting to life in her own bosom.

"You have made my lot easier now that I can see and speak with you before I die," said Robert, trying to hide from her the grief he felt at the thought that this was to be their last meeting.

"Ah—yes," quickly returned the maiden, stepping back.

"And this brings to my mind the fact that there may be no time to lose. I have not come here without some hope. So we must to business now ; and God grant that we may meet again to talk of other matters." Her fair face was flushed now, and she trembled with anxiety. "Does the guard ever visit you at night?"

"Yes—at midnight—always," answered Robert.

"Then I have some things here which may be of use to you. We must hurry, for the sergeant may be in upon us ere we know it."

Thus speaking she threw off her cloak, beneath which was a shawl. Upon removing the latter article the coat of a British trooper was revealed ; and upon removing that there was still another beneath it ! She then turned, and from beneath her dress she drew two pairs of breeches to correspond with the coats ; and next came two fatigue caps and two white leather belts.

"Here are your uniforms," she said with a hopeful smile ; "and I think, with them on, you will easily pass, in the night, for English soldiers."

The two prisoners were too much astonished to speak, and Rosalie proceeded :

"I went to Kate Van Ruter's as I came along. Her brother is a gunsmith—and of her I got these two saws. She said they would cut through the hardest iron as though it were wood."

As she spoke she drew from her bosom the two saws, and handed them to Robert. They were small instruments—with blades not much larger than a good-sized watch-spring, and firmly fixed in frames of steel.

"Here," the maiden added, ere either of her auditors had spoken—"let us try one of them. But first we'll be on our guard. With this she caught up the garments and belts, and hid them carefully beneath the straw, and then came back to Robert.

"Come close to the door," she said, "and then we can hear if any one comes. Here, sir—you hold the candle."

Karmel took up the light, and then Rosalie applied the saw to the neck of the bolt that confined the irons to her lover's wrists. The keen teeth took hold of the soft, tough

iron quickly, and in a few moments the head of the bolt was off!

"There," she uttered, with hopeful joy, "what think you of that? Oh, if you can but knock down the guard when he comes to your cell at midnight—call him in for something, and gag him—if you can but silence him, why may you not make your escape? In these garbs I have brought, you may pass for British soldiers."

Robert quickly freed his wrists from the cumbersome irons; and the first use he made of his arms was to throw them about the noble girl who had thus boldly shown her love and devotion.

"Rosalie! Noble, generous Rosalie!" he uttered, "how shall I ever show my gratitude for this?"

"By using all your powers to make your escape, so that the bright hopes of the past may yet be realized," the maiden replied, clinging fondly to her lover.

"Pardon me," spoke the old scout, earnestly; "but we must be on the alert. There is no time to waste. Rosalie—suffer me so to call you—if I live you shall see in the future that I have not forgotten this night's deeds! You shall have cause for rejoicing in time to come."

"You remind me that we must be brief," the fair girl returned; "for the sergeant may soon be in upon us. But let me say this; if you get clear will you not make it in your way to be in Elizabethtown within one or two weeks? Andrew Van Ruter will be there, and he will bring to me any message you may wish to send. I would at least know of your safe—Ha! The officer comes!"

"We will go to Elizabethtown," quickly returned Robert; "and we will not leave, if we can help it, until we have seen Van Ruter. But," he added, with sudden earnestness, "my sister! Oh! what must become of her?"

"Have no uneasiness on that score," the maiden replied; "Clara has been to see me. It was she who told me you were here. I will look out for her welfare all I can. She has no fears for herself. Leave her to me."

In a moment more the door was opened, and the sergeant of the guard entered. Robert had placed the irons upon his wrists again, so that nothing out of the way was dis-

covered by the officer. Rosalie signified her readiness to depart, but before she did so she turned to the youngest prisoner and said :

“ I will see General Howe, and I will plead with him for your release—or, at least, for your preservation until an exchange of prisoners can be made.”

“ I think it will be of no use,” replied Robert, taking the cue at once. “ Still, I thank you all the same.”

“ The prisoner is right,” said the sergeant, speaking to Rosalie. “ His fate is fixed, and I am sure it cannot be altered.”

With this gratuitous piece of information he very politely handed the maiden from the cell ; and in a few moments more the door was bolted as before.

“ God bless her ! ” fervently ejaculated the scout, as the receding footsteps died away in the distance.

“ Aye—she is already blessed ! ” added the youth.

He turned his eyes towards his companion as he spoke, but no form met his gaze from the dense darkness of the place. Yet that utter gloom was no longer dreadful. The bright star of promise had arisen, and beyond the utter bleakness of the prison-house they could see the gleaming presence of Liberty waiting to lead them away !

CHAPTER IX.

THE FUGITIVES.

THE prisoners waited until they heard the upper door closed, and then Robert carefully laid off his irons and bade Karmel come and have his hands set free. It was an easy matter to place the blade of the saw upon the neck of the bolt, and ere long the iron was cut in twain. The shackles were then removed ; and after this the youth knelt down and felt for the bolt that secured his companion's feet. He was not long in finding it, nor was he long in sawing it off after he had found it.

“ Now,” said Karmel, as he stepped free from the heavy

irons, "let me have the saw, and you shall quickly be rid of your British ornaments."

"I shall give them up without regret, you may be assured," was Robert's reply, as he handed the saw to the scout.

The old man kneeled down, and in the course of two minutes the youth was entirely freed from his shackles.

"Now," said Karmel, "we must have our plans all laid. The sergeant will of course come around at midnight."

"He always has done so," responded Robert; "and I surely hope he will not miss it to-night. If he should," he added, in a tone of apprehension, "our sudden hopes might be all blown to the winds."

"I think we need have no fears on that score," resumed the scout. "From the regularity with which we have been visited thus far it is evident that there is a standing order to that effect from headquarters; and if such is the case, of course the order will not be neglected. Surely, if no one should come to us before morning, our hopes would be blow to the wind, as you say; for we could not pass these two faces off in daylight under a thousand British uniforms. But we need have no such fear. These soldiers are the most precise in the world in their obedience to standing orders; and one so important as the overlooking of dangerous prisoners will not be neglected under any circumstances. Don't you see?"

"Yes, yes, I see," replied Robert. "I had not thought of this before. However, it's all plain now. The officer will be here in something over two hours."

"Yes. It must be going on towards ten, and he will be here at midnight. I think we had better not touch the clothing until we have him in our power."

"Certainly not," said the youth. "If we have on those uniforms it will excite his suspicion at once. And then if we wait until he is captured we may have his lantern to dress by."

"That's so," responded Karmel. "And to capture him I think will be easy work. One of us can sit close up in the corner here, opposite the entrance, and call him in; while the other stands snug up against the door-way to

knock him down after he shall have entered. One of these heavy foot-irons will be just thing to give him a welcome with. It will not kill him ;—or rather, *we* will not kill him—but only floor him, and then we can easily bind and silence him.”

This plan seemed as good as any ; and as there was nothing more to be done at present, the prisoners put their irons on again, and then sat down to await the coming of the officer. They took the precaution of thus putting on their irons, for fear some one might possibly look in unexpectedly upon them.

The usual cry was passed by the sentinels at ten o'clock ; and so repeated every half-hour. Half-past ten—eleven—half-past eleven, came, and no one had visited the prison cells. The two condemned Patriots now watched the passage of the moments with intense anxiety. The time was nigh at hand which was the seal their fate. They were not free yet. The question was,—“ Should they be ? ”

And to those two men the question was a momentous one. Not momentous, mind you, because the question of their own liberty was alone concerned ; but because they might still live to help to plant the tree of Liberty firmly upon American soil. This to them was of the first importance.

On flew the moments, and the lingering hour was well gone.

“ Hark ! ” uttered Robert.

From the station in front of the prison came that oft-repeated cry, long drawn out—

“ *A-l-l's w-e-l-l !* ”

The sentinel upon the next post took it up, and on it went, from lip to lip, along the line of the camp, until the whole town had been startled by the shout. And this midnight call is given with more force and gusto than are others, for the sentinel who had been pacing the frozen ground for two long hours is to be relieved, and as he hears his companion nearest the guard-house issue the cry, he knows the relief has been called.

The prisoners knew that the sergeant would be along very soon, as it was his duty to report all safe to the officer

who relieved him ; so they made preparations for the work at hand. Robert might have the quickest movement, and he agreed to stand by the door. He took the heavy bar of the foot-irons, with one of the shackles upon it, and thus armed he sought the door, and placed himself close to it, but in such a position that he would not be likely to be seen by any one who might come directly in.

The youth had hardly stationed himself when the sound of feet was heard upon the stairs which led to the cellar. Their cell was generally the first one visited, and it was so on this occasion. They heard the heavy bolts withdrawn ; and they saw the light stream in as the door was opened.

"All right ?" asked the sergeant, looking in.

"No !" answered Karmel. "I wish you'd just come in and see whether this fellow's dead or alive."

"What's to pay now ?" the officer asked, stepping quickly in.

But before he had opportunity to satisfy himself upon the point, he received a blow upon the head, which felled him to the floor like a dead man !

"Quick," uttered Karmel, springing forward and securing the lantern. "We must throw on our new garments and get up if possible before the relieved guard come in. I think we can do it if we are spry."

Without further remark they bound a kerchief tightly about the sergeant's mouth, and then lashed his feet and hands with his own belts. Their next movement was to the clothing which Rosalie had brought them, and this they easily drew on over the garments they already wore. They now had on the regular uniform of the soldiers who had charge of the prison, and also the belts and caps. The sergeant, who was just beginning to show signs of life, was armed with a sword and a brace of common heavy holster-pistols. These the prisoners took, and having seen that their saws were safe—for those handy tools might come in play again at some time—they prepared to leave.

"Shall we take the lantern ?" asked Robert.

"We must take it till we reach a point beyond which we shall not need it," replied Karmel. "But we will not carry

it up, for it would surely expose us, as it is probably the particular property of the acting officer of the guard."

With this Robert took up the lantern and followed his companion from the cell. They closed the door behind them, and then hurried on. When they reached the stairs they ascended to the head, where they stopped for a moment to listen. Next beyond these stairs was a small entry-way, which had at some time been used as a sort of store-room, and which was now used for a clothes-press. The sentinel of which we have spoken as walking over the prisoners' heads, was posted at the head of a small stairway in the rear of the building, and his walk extended over the cells. There was no need of a sentry at this other point, as the guard was so near at hand.

Karmel listened until he was assured that there was no one within the small room ahead, and then turning to his companion he said :

"Beyond this little place is the guard-room, you know. Let us walk directly through without looking to the right or left. Those who may be in there now are probably of the new guard, and will not know but that we have been sent down here for some honest purpose. Come—extinguish the light—and then follow."

Thus speaking the scout opened the door and passed into the entry, where soldiers' coats were hung up, while Robert blew out the light and quickly joined him. They heard the sound of voices, but stopped not to listen. The door of the guard-room was thrown open, and the two patriots entered. There were four men there, and from the manner in which they rubbed their eyes and yawned, it was plain that they had just been turned out from their beds. With heads erect, and faces slightly averted, the fugitives walked boldly through. They had just reached the opposite door when one of the guard spoke :

"Hallo !—What's up now ? Who are you ?"

"From Sir William Howe," answered Robert, quickly and frankly, but without stopping or turning his head.

"Eh ? Them Rebels arn't pardoned, are they ?" pursued the Englishman.

"They've been making some curious confessions," replied the youth. "They won't swing to-morrow."

"Can't yer stop a minute, and tell a fellow—"

But Robert heard no more. He had passed into the little hall, and Karmel had opened the front door; so he stepped quietly out, and in a moment more he trod the cold hard snow.

"Now, what?" uttered the youth, as they hesitated in front of the prison.

"Where are the guard? Ah! here they come. See—from the south here," returned the scout, as he saw a body of men just turning into the road upon which the jail stood. "Let us turn in the opposite direction. Come—they must not see us. And we must hurry, too"; added the old man, as he started on, "for the alarm may be given ere long. They'll go to look for the sergeant, and as soon as they find him there'll be a general movement."

"Some one is following us," whispered Robert, after they had walked a few rods. "See—on the opposite side of the road, just behind."

Karmel turned, and saw a dark form not far distant, which seemed to be going the same way with themselves.

"It's only one," he said. "If he attacks us we can easily stop his mouth. Let's not notice him. Or, at least,—appear not to."

The road upon which the fugitives were traveling was the main road of the village, and they were now about half way between the prison and the residence of Sir Arthur Lincoln. Only a few rods further on was a cross-road which ran east and west, and into this the scout meant to turn, his greatest care now being to keep clear of the sentinels, as they had not the password or countersign, and would therefore be sure of being apprehended if they allowed themselves to be hailed.

The cross-road was reached, and the fugitives were about to turn into it, when they heard a low, sweet voice distinctly say:

"Robert!"

"It is Rosalie!" the youth uttered, stopping and turning back.

And so it proved. The noble girl had been on the look-out, for she had further help for her friends. She was closely muffled up in the same cloak which she had worn to the prison, while on her head she wore a man's fur cap.

"Dear Robert," she said, as she came up and gave her warmly-gloved hand to her lover, "we must hasten, for you have no time to lose. I knew you would need some things which you could gain from no other source so well as from me, so I came out, and have been on the watch for you. Here are four pistols, which I found in our house, with powder and ball; and here is a purse containing two hundred dollars in gold—Ah—you will not wrong me, I know."

She said this, as Robert made a motion as though he would reject the money; but as she thus gently chided him, he took the purse.

"I have also obtained the countersign for you," she returned. "I got it by listening at the general's door. It is '*Delaware!*' You won't forget it. They have no hailing sign or password beside this. And now do you keep directly on by this cross-road to the east. At the distance of half a mile, on the river's bank, you will reach a farmhouse, where there is a guard of twenty men, who have charge of over a hundred horses. You may manage to obtain a couple of good animals there. None of the soldiers on that station have been in town since you have been here, so you will not be likely to be known. If you do not obtain horses there, you may have to buy them at the place where you were taken prisoners, if you cannot borrow them. Be careful, now,—be wise and witty,—and be sure and see Andrew Van Ruter in Elizabethtown. God be your guide and support, and your hope in your hour of need. Farewell—both—till we meet again!"

Ere either Robert or his companion could make any reply, the fair girl was gone; and having watched her departing form until it became lost in the gloom, they turned into the cross-road, and pushed on. At the distance of a dozen rods, they stopped and arranged the weapons they possessed. Robert was the best swordsman; so he took that article, and secured its scabbard to his belt. The pistols which Rosalie had given them were

common "breast-pistols," so called—smaller than belt pistols, and larger than the usual pocket-pistol. They already had two, which they had taken off the sergeant; so Robert took the latter, while his companion concealed the four smaller ones about his person.

At a short distance further on they were hailed by a sentinel—

"Who comes there?"

"A friend!" answered Robert.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!"

The youth advanced to within some six or eight feet of the sentry, when he was ordered to—

"Stand, and give the countersign!"—the soldier bringing his musket to a charge as the order was given.

"*Delaware!*" said our hero.

"The countersign is right. Pass with your companion."

This obstacle thus easily passed, gave the fugitives renewed confidence; yet they knew that their absence must be soon discovered if the sergeant was missed, and hence that they could not be in too much hurry.

They had reached a point where the road struck the Raritan, and where the track had been made upon the river, when the report of a musket broke upon the night air. It was from the village they had left, and was immediately followed by half a dozen more.

"They have discovered our flight!" exclaimed Robert, at the same time instinctively quickening his pace.

"No mistake about that," rejoined Karmel; "and we may—Ha! See!—a rocket! The whole camp will be aroused!"

As he spoke, a rocket sprang up into the dark sky, hissing fiercely as it darted along on its upward course, and leaving a blood-red, sparkling trail behind it. The sudden light glared out with an illuminating power for miles around, and the fugitives fancied they could hear the hubbub already created among the soldiers.

"What shall we do now!" queried Robert.

Aye—what should they do? To turn from the beaten track was out of the question, for not only was there no hiding-place at hand, but the snow lay so deep upon the

river's banks, that no person could wallow through it save by a continual climbing and struggling. All they could do was to push on and trust to fortune.

On—on they went ; and at length they saw the gleaming of a light ahead. It was in the farm-house Rosalie had told them of. At almost the same moment their attention was called in another direction. Behind them came a company of horsemen ! The tramp of many hoofs could be plainly heard upon the ice of the river !

“ We must gain the farm-house before them ! ” exclaimed Karmel, redoubling his efforts.

“ But what then ? ” queried Robert, keeping by his side. “ Even that is full of our deadly enemies.”

“ I know—I know,” uttered the scout ; “ but we must reach it. They are almost upon us ! Hear them ! They are upon a full gallop ! ”

“ Aye—and here they are ! ” cried Robert.

Karmel turned his head, and saw the dark outlines of a dozen horsemen not twenty rods behind them ; and coming on at a leaping pace !

The farm-house was close at hand. A few desperate efforts, and the fugitives had clambered up the river's bank ; and just as the horsemen came leaping up the same bank they had reached the cottage-door. They stopped upon the broad stoop to gain breath, and as they did so the door was opened, and half-a-dozen British soldiers came crowding out !

CHAPTER X.

STRUGGLES FOR LIBERTY.

It was a moment of strange excitement to the fleeing Rebels. From the village they had left, the peals of the alarm-bell came breaking through the air—behind them, and almost upon them, were a troop of pursuers—and before them, in their very faces, huddled another squad of their enemies. But their presence of mind did not forsake them.

"Ha!" cried the old scout, the moment the door was opened, "you are just in time! Give us horses!—the fleetest you have! quick! Some prisoners have escaped from our prison, and come this way! Let us have horses!"

"There's no time to be lost!" added Robert energetically. "they were condemned prisoners—spies, and have gone off with much information concerning our camp! Let us have horses as quickly as possible!"

Three of the soldiers at once started for the barn, which was only a few rods distant, and the Rebels went with them. Just as they left the door the horsemen rode up.

"Hallo!" cried their leader, "have you seen two Rebel prisoners pass this way?"

"No," answered one of them at the door; "but we've got the alarm, and have sent for horses."

"Who brought the alarm?"

"Two soldiers from the inner camp."

"Ha!—the two that came up the bank just before us?"

"I don't know. They were at the door when we came; and they gave us the alarm, and asked for horses."

"By the powers?" exclaimed the leader of the horsemen, "I doubt them! They are the Rebels themselves? They have just fled from the town, and have managed in some way to get our uniforms! They passed the sentry on the eastern outpost only a little while before we came along. Where are they? They are the Rebels as sure as death! No one else would have left the camp on foot!"

"Ha! there they are!" cried another of the troopers, as he saw a party come from the barn, leading the horses. "See!—there!"

In the mean time Karmel and Robert had been hurrying up the unsuspecting soldiers who accompanied them to the barn.

"The swiftest you have!" the old scout uttered, as they reached the stable. "General Howe told us you had some swift ones here."

"So we have," returned one of the Englishmen; and thus speaking he went and led out a superb looking animal.

Karmel caught a bridle which hung close at hand, and having put it on, he seized the first saddle he came to, and

threw it over the beast's back. And at the same time Robert had not been idle. He had also obtained a superb animal, and had as quickly caparisoned him.

In a moment more the Rebels leaped into their saddles and rode forth. The soldiers who had been with them had not thought of getting horses for themselves for the quickly varying orders of the fugitives had kept them eagerly bent upon another point. So our friends rode out alone; and it was just as they left the barn that the horseman at the door of the house had spoken.

"—sh!" uttered Karmel, sharply and quickly, to his companion. "Those fellows at the house may suspect us: The river has a clear track for a mile and a half. It is clear to the Piscataway ferry road. Let's take it and ride for our lives!"

And with these words they urged their horses up, and dashed away toward the river, making for the same point where they had come up.

"Blood and thunder!" gasped the leader of the troopers, as he saw the movement; "there they go! If they ain't Rebels then skin me! How in heaven's name did they get those horses?"

"Why—of course we thought they were our men," returned one of the occupants of the cot.

But the troopers did not stop to hear him out. At a command from their leader they dashed away—across the road—down the river's bank—and on after the fugitives, while those at the house were feeling particularly foolish to think they had been so essentially befooled. But it was too late to mend the matter as far as it had gone; and the most they could do was to prepare the best horses they had left and join in the chase, which they did as quickly as possible.

"Curses upon them!" growled an old hostler; "they've got the two best hanimals in the stable!"

And so they had. In their free use of General Howe's name, and the hurry and confusion they made, they had succeeded in bewildering the soldiers to everything save the orders they gave.

On flew the Rebels; and very shortly they discovered

that they had gained a couple of horses which would not fail them. The troopers were at first only about six rods behind, but the distance gradually increased between the pursuers and the pursued—increased save with one exception. There was one of the Englishmen who came on at a remarkable speed, and not only distancing all the companions, but slowly gaining upon the Rebels. He was the leader of the troop, and possessed the best horse in the camp outside of the commander-in-chief.

"We leave them all but one," said Robert, who had occasionally turned his gaze back upon the enemy.

"Aye," returned Karmel. "We shall have no trouble from the rest, for I am sure our horses are better than theirs. If this single fellow reaches us we must dispatch him, that's all."

"Of course we must, or he'll dispatch us," added the youth.

"It's the fortune of war," resumed the scout; "but if he is wise he won't come up with us alone. He must know, if he knows anything, that two men fleeing from an ignominious death, at the hands of a national enemy, will not hesitate to cut down any one who may attempt to intercept them."

At the distance of a mile and a half they came to the point where the ferry road struck off from the river's bank to Piscataway. The track in that direction was open, but of course it could not be so good as the river road.

"Shall we take to the land or not?" queried Karmel.

"I should say yes," returned Robert. "At the distance of a mile, directly north, we shall strike the Bonham road at Piscataway, and we can take that way towards old Peter Armstrong's once more."

"Then up the bank it is!" the old scout cried, as he turned his horse to the left towards the shore.

Before they gained the bank, they turned to take a look at their pursuers. Only one was in sight, and he was very near upon them, having been gradually gaining ever since they started. He had a powerful beast, as well as a fleet one, and would evidently overhaul them ere long. And then, when they gained the bank road, the trooper would

have a new advantage, for, in all probability, the snow was deeper there, and the more powerful horse would be the double gainer.

The fugitives could see up the river for some distance—they could see as far as the gloom would let them, but of the other horsemen they could see nothing.

"They can not have thought to cut us off, by taking any cross-cut, can they?" said Robert.

"No," returned Karmel, "that is impossible, for there is no such chance. No—they are behind us, and in all probability still on the pursuit. You must know that we have ridden very fast. This fellow close upon us has one of those powerful English racers—a cross of the old war-horse and the Arabian. I know them well."

"Then listen," resumed Robert, as they reached the river's bank, at the same time drawing in his rein; "if this fellow is to overhaul us, which is sure, had he not better do it here? If we continue to race with him after we get into a worse road, we shall only tire our horses for nothing. We can easily keep clear of the others. What say you?"

"Just my mind, exactly," the scout replied. "I have been thinking of it for some time past. He will overtake us at best, and we may as well save the wind and strength of our beasts for a surer race. Let us stop here."

The fugitives were now upon the river, but directly at the edge of the bank where the road came down; and as Karmel ceased speaking they stopped and turned their horses about. In a few moments more the trooper came to within fair conversing distance.

"Halt!" shouted Karmel, in a tone of thunder.

The Englishman pulled up in a moment, being not over three rods distant.

"You know who we are, I suppose?" the scout resumed.

"Yes. You're the Rebels who have escaped from prison.

"You are right. And now answer me this: Do you suppose we are going to let you capture us?"

"We'll see about that," was the somewhat laconic reply.

"You will see!" thundered Karmel. "But first let me

give you a piece of advice. We don't wish to kill you, but shall have to if you don't leave us to pursue our course unmolested. You have the better horse, and we must have you out of the way, either by compromise or by force."

"You speak truly, sir," the trooper returned. "I have the best horse in the camp. But if you think you can frighten off an old English soldier from his duty, you are very much mistaken."

"We won't talk about *duty* when the work of your army in this country is under consider—"

Thus far had Karmel spoken, when he was stopped by a bright flash at the trooper's right hand—a sharp report—and the whizzing of a pistol ball past his ear.

"Aha! That's your game, is it?" the scout uttered, between his set teeth. And as he spoke, he turned to his companion, and was upon the point of asking him for one of his large pistols, when the latter himself drew a weapon, and cocked it.

The form of the trooper was clearly defined against the white snow, and Robert took good aim. He trusted not to hitting the head, but aimed at the bosom. There was a star-gleam upon the upper surface of his pistol barrel, and hence his sight was clear. Just as the enemy was evidently making a motion towards another pistol, the youth fired. The trooper was seen to bring his hand quickly to his bosom, and an audible groan broke from his lips.

"Would ye fire again?" asked Robert, placing his hand upon a second pistol.

"Not yet," returned Karmel. "I think he is seriously hurt. Where did you aim?"

"Right at the center of his breast. My aim was a good one. I saw his form plainly, and upon my pistol there was a well-defined pencil of light."

"Yes—but see!—He carries his hand to his left bosom!—His head droops, too. But what is he doing?—He is raising a pistol!"

"So he is," said Robert. "I've a mind to fire again. I may have—Ha! he has dropped it! And see how he reels in his saddle!"

At this moment, the trooper's horse gave a sudden wheel,

and his rider tumbled off upon the ice. The Rebels waited no longer.

"We must let him go," said Robert.

"Aye—we must, for—hark! The rest are coming. Don't you hear them?"

"Yes—plainly."

The tramp of horses could be heard upon the ice, and of course the troopers could not be far distant. The fugitives just looked upon the form of the man who had fallen. It did not move—it had not moved since it tumbled from the horse. Being thus assured that all trouble from him was at an end, they turned their horses' heads, and sped up the bank.

They found the road much better than they had expected, though there were places where the snow was deep, and where the horses had hard work. Yet they worked along as swiftly as possible, for they believed their pursuers would redouble their efforts after they had found their leader dead—for that he was dead the Rebels felt sure.

The little hamlet where Peter Armstrong's cot stood, was only about two miles and a half from the river, by the road, and the fugitives reached it in half an hour. Of course they could not think of remaining there, yet Karmel wished to get his rifle, so they rode up to the door of Peter's house, and gave a loud rap. In a few moments, just as Robert was on the point of repeating the summons, the little window over the door was opened, and that same old flannel night-cap, with Peter's head in it, made its appearance.

"Who's there?" the old man asked.

"Karmel," returned the scout. "We can't stop—the British are after us; but I want my rifle and pouch."

The host closed the window, and ere long appeared at the door. He was overjoyed to see his two friends, and he expressed himself in terms which left no doubt of his sincerity.

"I heard ye was to be hung," he said, after running off his song of joy.

"So we were," replied the scout. "But we escaped from prison not over two hours and a half ago. A troop

of pursuers are behind us; so you see we cannot stop. Let me have my rifle, and horn, and pouch, and at some other time I'll see you and tell you all about it."

"But you'll just come in and git somethin' warmin'."

"No—we dare not leave our horses."

"Oh—yes—I did not think of that. Well—hold on a minute."

With this the old man disappeared, and when he returned, he bore in one hand the scout's rifle and equipments, and in the other a decanter and drinking-cup.

"Here is some right-down smart old Jamaica," he said, with an emphatic smack of the lips.

The fugitives each took a very respectable portion of the warming medium, and then, having thanked the kind host, Robert remounted his horse, while Karmel examined his rifle to see if it was sure of "going off." This reminded the youth that he had an empty pistol, so, while his companion poured out a fresh priming, he reloaded the weapon he had discharged for the benefit of the racing trooper. After this the scout slung his rifle across his back, and then, leaping into his saddle, he bade the old farmer good-bye, and set off.

"Remember," cried Robert, as he gathered up his reins to follow, "if anybody asks for us, you haven't seen us. You've been fast asleep all night."

"Don't fear on that score," said Peter. "But just you remember one thing," he added, in a tone so earnest that Robert stopped to listen. "You haint got out of danger yet. There's a squad of British troopers further east than here. They've got their outposts all over this section."

"Thank you," returned our hero; and thus speaking he dashed off after his friend, whom he overtook in a few moments.

"Peter says there's a squad of English soldiers east of us, and that their outposts reach all over this section," said he, as he rode up by his companion's side.

"I expected as much," the scout rejoined. "But we'll keep on our British uniforms, and in case of need they may help us much."

"So they may."

‘ And now what is your aim ? ’

“ Why—Elizabethtown, of course. That, by the road, is fourteen miles distant. Eight miles from here lives a friend of mine, who will welcome us. We will reach his place ere we stop.”

After this the two rode on in comparative silence for some time. The stars were all out in a cloudless sky,—a sort of vapory curtain in which had hung over the earth in the early part of the night having passed off,—the air was clear, sharp, and frosty ; and the wind, which had but little force, was at their backs, so that they felt none of its cutting power. Sirius, the monarch of the fixed stars, was well over towards the western horizon, where it hung like a ball of brilliant fire, and thus the fugitives knew that it must be near the last hours of night.

The road grew better as they advanced towards the eastern settlement, and their horses traveled more easily. At length—perhaps ’twas two hours after leaving Armstrong’s—Karmel turned up into the yard of a small, snug-looking farm-house. He rapped at the door, and, as at Peter’s, a head was put out at one of the windows.

“ We don’t want no British soldiers here ! ” cried a gruff voice.

“ Ye may see British uniforms,” returned the scout ; “ but you’ll surely find anything but Britishers inside of them.”

“ Ha—Karmel ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Good ! Hold on jest one minute. Karmel in British harness ! What in mercy’s name—”

The rest of the sentence was lost by the closing of the window.

CHAPTER XI.

A FEARFUL THREAT.

THERE was commotion in New Brunswick on that winter's morning. All sorts of wild stories were afloat. In one of the stores, where good people congregated at early dawn to imbibe heated potions of "prime old Jamaica,"—with sugar and spice in it—the story was current that the whole guard had been murdered. But presently the delightful theme of wonderment was essentially curtailed. A man came in who "had been there," and he informed them that only a sergeant and one sentinel had been murdered.

"But how'd they do it?"

Ah—that question had been often asked; and though few knew, if any, outside of the guard-room, yet many pretended to give a correct version of the whole affair; and, if some of them were to be believed, then the two Rebels must have possessed such powers as man never possessed before.

At the dwelling of Sir Arthur Lincoln there were varied emotions. A number of officers had called in upon the commander-in-chief, and the thing was being thoroughly discussed. The sergeant who had been knocked down in the prisoner's cell was there; and so were the men who were in the guard-room when the fugitives passed through.

The sergeant had told how he was called in, and the circumstances that followed.

"Did you see anything of the uniforms which they wore off?" the general asked.

"No, sir—nothing. They must have been hidden."

"But how could they have got their irons off?" queried Sir William.

"The heads of the connecting bars were cut off with some very sharp, keen instrument," answered a lieutenant who had been on the spot and seen them.

"Then some one must have been in communication with the prisoners," said Howe, sternly. "Not only the saws—for saws they must have been—but the uniforms must have

been carried in by some unsuspected visitor. Who was in there?"

"I was there about seven o'clock, I think, last evening," remarked Major Clondel. "But I am sure all was right then, for I took particular notice. I spoke to them of their cold abiding-place, and as I did so I looked upon the straw which formed their bed, and I know there was nothing hidden beneath it. And, of course, I know they had no uniforms on under their own clothing, for I saw their bosoms plainly. And their irons were all right, too, for I thought to myself of their strength, and of their security from being slipped off, and at the same time noticed them particularly. I gave you last evening the result of the interview."

"Then some one was in there after you," the general said, vehemently.

At this juncture Major O'Harra arose and went around behind Howe's chair, and stooping over he whispered—

"Let this point of the subject rest for the present. I think I can explain it to you when we are alone."

The commander gazed up into his aid's face with a dark frown upon his brow; but when he noticed the evident concern and nervousness of the major, his countenance grew brighter, and he said:

"Very well. So let it be."

"One by one, individuals who had been sent for came dropping in, until all were present who could know anything about the matter. The men who were in the guard-room when the prisoners passed through related what they had seen, and from the remarks made by one of the Rebels at the time, they supposed them to be messengers from headquarters.

The sentinel whom they had passed described the appearance of two men, in English uniforms, who had passed his post shortly after midnight, having the countersign all right. The officers at once recognized the two Rebels in the descriptions he gave.

Next came the troopers who had gone in pursuit. They had gone as far as the hamlet at the Bonham Cross, and fearing to venture further with jaded horses, and knowing that the fugitives had the best two animals the river stables

could afford, they had thought further pursuit useless. They told how they had found their lieutenant dead, having been shot through the heart, and how they had heard the report of two pistols before they came in sight of the spot where their leader had fallen. They said that the latter must have fired first.

"How do you know?" asked the General.

"Because," replied one, who was a corporal, "he had drawn his second pistol; and he could not have fired one pistol, and put that back carefully into the holster, and then drawn another, after having a ball through his heart."

This appeared very reasonable, and was accepted. This same corporal related how the prisoners had managed to obtain the horses, and dash off before them.

"Well—well," uttered Sir William, in a half angry and half regretful tone, "they are gone—that's plain enough; and if we take them again it must be in the regular way. However, we'll have one thing published, and have it a standing order: If one, or both, of these fellows are again taken, they shall be brought to the camp if convenient, and there hung at once,—not put in prison at all; but hung on the hour that sees them within our lines. I will issue the order that any commissioned officer may do this!"

This thing was fixed up in shape for publishing to the camp, and then the assemblage was broken up.

Finally, the commander-in-chief and O'Harra were alone.

"Now, Major—out with your story," said the General.

"Probably you are aware that our host's fair daughter loves this young Rebel?" returned O'Harra.

"Yes," responded Sir William, opening his eyes. "Her father told me about it on the morning the two fellows were here."

"Well," resumed the Major, "I think she has done the mischief."

"She? Rosalie Lincoln?" uttered the general, in blank astonishment. "Impossible! How could she have got in there?"

"Ah—there you must blame me. But listen: She came to me, and wished to see that young man ere he died. She

felt it to be her duty, she said. I could not resist her appeal. I never dreamed of any danger. I made it a condition of the permission that she should go late in the evening so that others should not see her, and claim her visit as a precedent. I may have done wrong, though had she pleaded with you as she did with me, I am sure you would have yielded as I did."

At first a furious frown had gathered upon the commander's face ; but gradually, as he pondered upon the subject, the frown passed away, and finally he said :

"Well—perhaps I might. Yet it is a bad thing. As true as I live, I would rather have given up any two Rebel officers we have than lose them. That old spy is most dangerous. He knows all the King's friends throughout most of the Jerseys, and they can hardly call a meeting without his knowledge. But we must make the best of it. However, I cannot let this pass without strongly impressing upon your mind the necessity of strictness in future. Never again, under any circumstances, admit a friend of a prisoner to that prisoner's cell without it be a case of peculiar necessity ; and even then the officer of the guard must be present at the interview."

"I have learned a lesson I shall never forget," returned O'Harra, in a tone of respectful subjection, which disarmed his superior of any lingering feeling of bitterness towards him he might have entertained.

After this the major left the room, and Sir Arthur Lincoln was sent for. He found the general in a troubled, nervous mood, and was anxious to know what information had been gained upon the subject of the morning.

During all this time Rosalie had been with her mother. She had heard the noise, and witnessed much of the confusion ; and though she could not but entertain some fears, yet the joy at knowing that her dearly-beloved Robert was safe much more than counterbalanced her fears for self. She had told her mother all she had done, and the intense gratitude of the invalid parent was another source of joy and satisfaction.

"Oh ! I am very glad," the mother murmured, in a low whisper, for she could not speak aloud. Her lungs were

well-nigh gone ! “ I am glad Robert is safe. It would have been a terrible blow had he been stricken down in the flower of youth. I should not have left you, my child, so peacefully ; for the time may come when you will need him for a protector ! ”

“ What do you mean, mother ? ” the fair girl asked. “ Come—tell me what these dark hints mean. ”

Several times of late had the sick, dying woman spoken in that strain to her child. She seemed to fear that the father would forsake her, though she would not explain.

“ I meant nothing, ” she said, “ only that you can never be happy if Robert is lost to you. ”

Rosalie would not trouble her mother with questions, for she saw plainly that anything which gave labor to her mind caused her pain. Yet she knew that there was some hidden meaning to the words that had been spoken ; and she could not drive the fear from her that her father had no real paternal affection for her ! And to this conclusion she had more than her mother’s words to help her. The treatment she had received at her father’s hands for some months past, and his coldness and harshness towards her, had seemed to give stronger point to her mother’s dubious hints.

It was near the middle of the afternoon, and Rosalie had just drawn her chair up to her mother’s bedside, after having fixed and administered some medicine, when Patience entered and told the maiden her father wished to see her in the library.

“ Courage, courage, Rose, ” whispered her mother.

“ I do not fear, ” returned the daughter ; “ so be under no apprehension on my account. ”

And thus speaking she turned from the room and descended to her father’s private apartment.

Sir Arthur was walking to and fro with quick, nervous strides, when his daughter entered. He stopped a moment to gaze upon her, which he did with a sort of vacant stare, and then paced on. In a few moments more, however, he stopped and took a seat, and motioned for Rosalie to do the same.

“ Well, my fine lady, ” he uttered, with his lips com-

pressed, and his thumbs twirling, "you have been doing a very fine piece of work !"

The fair girl trembled at first ; but she soon managed to overcome all outward signs of trepidation, and then she replied, very calmly, but yet politely :

"Ere I can reply you must be more explicit in your charge ; for I suppose you mean to charge me with some offence."

"You are very cool for one who stands in a position such as you occupy," the father returned, showing his bitterness, though he made an effort to conceal it. "Perhaps you do not know, or would profess not to know, the cause of all the commotion you must have witnessed this morning."

"On the contrary, sir, I am very sure what has caused it all."

"And perhaps you will be good enough to tell me what you think it is."

"Yes, sir : It is the escape of two Patriot prisoners."

"*Patriot* prisoners ? If you have any regard for your own welfare you will not use such a term in my hearing again. Just remember that, if you please."

"I meant no offense, sir ; indeed I did not," quickly returned Rosalie. She spoke earnestly and sincerely ; but a close observer could have seen that the harsh words of her father—so roughly spoken on so trivial a ground—had produced a deep impression upon her. There was a quick sparkling of the dark eye ; a compression of the pale lips ; and a slight, nervous dilation of the finely carved nostrils, that told of a spirit within which could brook no senseless tyranny.

"No matter what you *meant*. It is what you *said* that I heard. I want none of your Rebel proclivities shown here !"

Why did he speak thus ? Why did that father use such language to one whom he should have controlled, and to one who he knew possessed a spirit as free and jealous of restraint as his own ?

"Do not speak so, father," the maiden earnestly pleaded, controlling her deep feeling by a powerful effort. "I am

not a mere block of wood, to be set upon, or kicked, without feeling it. He who would receive from a child honor and respect should not transcend all bounds of—”

“Stop! I want no lessons from you. We are not in the habit of taking advice from those who are under condemnation. Now tell me if you know how those two Rebels managed to escape from their prison.”

“I have heard, sir, that they knocked down the sergeant of the guard, and then fled.”

“You trifle with me. Were you not in their cell last night?”

“I was, sir.”

“I was aware of it. Now tell me what you did towards helping these villains to escape.”

“Nothing, sir!” uttered the maiden, speaking quickly, and with much feeling.

“Ah—I did not think you would lie to me!”

“*Lie*, sir?” said Rosalie, her lips growing pale and trembling.

“Aye—I mean it.”

“And I mean what I say, sir. You would not admit the term I applied to those prisoners; and let me assure you that I have had nothing to do with any *villains*!”

“I choose to call them *villains*, madam!”

“I shall make no objections; though you may be assured that no word of mine shall recognize the applicability of the epithet.”

“We’ll see. Did you not help those villains to escape?”

“No, sir!”

“Beware?”

“I have answered you truly.”

The parent closed his hands nervously, and the gritting of his teeth was plainly heard. But he overcame the passion which seemed ready to burst forth, and swallowing his chagrin with a very bad grace, he resumed:

“Did you not render assistance to those two prisoners towards making their escape?”

“I did, sir.”

“You did?”

“I did.”

"And did you imagine I should pass the thing lightly by?"

"I thought of nothing beyond their escape, sir. When I have a duty to perform I am not in the habit of calculating extraneous consequences. I saw two men in prison—two men who had done no wrong—condemned to die an ignominious death. It was in my power to save them, and I did so."

Sir Arthur was upon the point of quick reply, but he checked himself; and instead of speaking, he arose and paced the floor. He had taken two or three turns when he stopped before his child.

"Will you tell me how you contrived to assist those men?—how you supplied them with the means of escape?"

"I carried them two suits of British uniform, sir, and an instrument with which to cut off their irons. The rest they did themselves."

Again the man paced up and down the floor; and when he finally resumed his seat, his face had assumed a stern, uncompromising look, and his whole expression was that of a man who had made up his mind upon a point from which no power could make him swerve.

"Rosalie," he spoke in a tone of vengeful calmness, "I know very well that any argument with you upon the merits of the Rebels' crime would be useless; so I will come at once to the subject upon which it is my desire to inform you. Since you have no care for my character I shall feel no confidence in you. One who can thus subject her father to the painful necessity of admitting such a stain upon his family name can have no claim upon his generosity or kindness. I suppose you still think you love this young Rebel?"

"I do love Robert Pemberton, sir."

"And so you were willing to sacrifice me to his escape."

"How so, sir?"

"How so? Did you not use the confidence which the King's officers repose in me to your purpose?"

"I meant to do no such thing, sir. I only used the influence which I was able to gain over Major O'Harra."

"A change of words cannot alter facts, madam! But

tell me : Had you any particular desire to free that old spy ? ”

“ You mean the man called Karmel ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ I had no more desire to free him than I might have had to free any man in his situation, whom I believed had been unjustly condemned. ”

“ Then you had no particular regard for this man ? ” The parent gazed searchingly into his child’s face as he thus spoke, and it was very evident that he would read her inmost thoughts if possible.

“ I don’t know as I understand your meaning, sir. You know my sympathies. I felt towards him as one might have felt who, in a foreign land, had met a deserving countryman in trouble. ”

“ Perhaps you know something of this man’s past life ? ” the baronet said, with another of those searching looks.

“ Nothing, sir. I never saw him before ; nor did I have any opportunity to hear any story of his life. ”

The anxious look passed from the parent’s face ; and for the moment the sense of relief seemed almost to overcome his passion ; but the feeling lasted not long. The old sternness came back, and with the vengeful look once more bent upon the maiden, he resumed :

“ The whole matter is now plain, and my mind is made up. For my own sake, if there were no other consideration, you should not remain here. Heretofore I have allowed your earnest pleading to influence me, but it shall be so no more. You shall marry with Elroy Pemberton, just as soon as he wishes it ! ”

For a few moments the fair maiden was too much startled to speak. She had expected a severe reprimand, and had been prepared for it ; but she was not prepared for such a threat.

“ Mind you, ” Sir Arthur added, as he noticed the look of blank astoundment which rested upon his daughter’s face, “ this is no mere whim, which your persuasions can avert. It is the firm purpose of my soul ; and it shall be consummated within the fortnight ! ”

“ No, no, sir ! ” the poor girl exclaimed, in a tone, and

with a look, which were far from selfish ; “ you will not take me from my sick, dying mother ! ”

“ Your mother does not need your help.”

“ She does ! Oh ! she does. You will not tear me from her now ! ”

“ I shall ! ”

“ No ! no ! Who shall attend her as I have done ? ”

“ Let her attend herself, then ! She has no business to be so sick. She has worried herself into it through mere idiotic folly. If she wants your company, let her go with you ! ”

Rosalie started up from her chair aghast ! She forgot all her own fears for the time in her utter astonishment at this heartless treatment of her mother. She had for a long time suspected that between her parents there was a fearful estrangement, but for such feelings as this language shadowed forth she had never looked. She gazed a moment into the man's face after he had spoken, and then bowed her head upon her hands, and burst into tears. Not even the threat of death to herself could have opened that fountain then, but the thought thus awakened of her kind and gentle mother moved her most deeply.

“ I have no more to say,” remarked the baronet, coldly and sternly ; “ at least not for the present. You can go to your mother now, but as sure as I live, and have my senses, you shall find your home with Elroy Pemberton within two weeks to come ! ”

Rosalie waited to hear no more. Without looking again upon her father she hurried from the room and turned towards her mother's chamber. But she hesitated ere she reached the door. She knew that she could not control her feelings then, and she dared not break the fearful intelligence to the dying loved one at present. So she kept on to her own apartment, and when she had reached it she threw herself upon her bed, and burst into a fresh transport of grief.

She knew that her father meant all that he had said ; and—oh ! how wild was her agony when she realized it—she knew that in his heart there was not one spark of love which her deepest prayers could kindle into sympathy !

God have mercy upon the righteous child that bears a parent's hatred !

CHAPTER XII.

NIGHT !

ROSALIE LINCOLN could not keep the truth from her mother. The poor girl's heart was heavy and sad, and she could not overcome it. She tried very hard to appear calm, and to have her mother think nothing unusual had happened ; but it was of no avail. She might as well have endeavored to make people believe her heart was full of evil as to have attempted to persuade them that it was not filled with grief. All who knew her could see very plainly that she was bowed down with fear and anguish.

And who should notice it more quickly than the mother who loved her devotedly ?

For a while the maiden kept the real cause of her trouble to herself ; but she had to give it up at length. Her mother had seen her unhappiness from the first, and at last the poor girl became assured that she suffered more from her unsatisfied desire than she could from knowing the whole.

"What is it, my poor child ?" the woman asked for the hundredth time that day. And she showed by her look and tone that the hidden thing was working fatally upon her.

Rosalie pondered once more, and finally resolved to tell all. She drew her chair to the bedside, and then, in a low, tremulous voice, she told the story of her father's harshness and cruelty. She told it all—told all she had seen and heard,—and when she had concluded, she threw her arms about her mother's neck, and wept aloud.

"Oh, mother, dear !" she uttered, "get well—get up once more, and we will flee from this place. I can support you,—I will work for you,—toil day and night—ere I will eat of the bread of one who loves me not ! Will you not do so ?"

The dying woman looked up into the tear-wet face of her child, and while a faint, grateful smile passed over her thin,

pale features—a smile of sad gratitude it was, like a momentary gleam of sunshine amid a storm,—she said:

“I cannot remain beneath his roof long, Rose; so have no more grief on my account.”

Poor Rose! She thought at the moment, so vividly was the picture she had drawn impressed upon her mind—the picture of a quiet cot away in some distant place, where she would work for her mother; she thought these words were an affirmative answer to her proposition; so she kissed her mother, and then sat down again.

Ah! that story had fallen upon a soul already bowed beneath a fearful weight, and it came as the last drop in the bucket. The frail vessel was almost overrun! The silver cord was loosed—the bowl was breaking!

Night passed away, and when the morning came Ellen Lincoln was very weak and faint. She told her child that the hour was at hand!

It was near two o'clock that an old woman hobbled up into the yard. She was habited in an old black cloak, which almost trailed in the snow, and upon her head she wore a hood of padded stuff, which was warm enough to make up for its lack of beauty. Her back was bent, and in her right hand she carried a stout staff. Her face was far from being ugly, though it could lay claims to no great share of beauty. There were many deep wrinkles upon it, and the matted hair which fell about her cheeks was well frosted with age.

Aunt Patience at once admitted her to the kitchen, and pulled a chair up to the fire for her.

“Have ye come from far off?” the housekeeper asked, after a simple salutation had been passed.

“Some distance,” the poor wayfarer replied; “I have come from Princeton.”

“Not without stoppin’, I hope!” Patience uttered.

“Oh, no, my good madam. I have stopped many times. But I didn’t stop here to rest. I have come for a particular purpose.”

The old woman’s voice was tremulous, though quite strong; and as she spoke she gazed into the face of the

good housekeeper, as though she would see there what sort of a disposition she had to deal with.

"Did you come here on business?" Aunt Patience asked.

"Yes. I came to see Mrs. Lincoln. I heard she was very sick."

"She's too sick for you to see her, I'm afraid," said Patience, with a sad shake of the head. "She's worse this mornin'—poor thing! I don't think she can stand it much longer!"

"Is she so sick?" the wayfarer returned, eagerly.

"She is, sartin. She is dyin'—dyin' as sure as the world!"

"Then I must see her. Will you not show me the way to her room?—Don't refuse me."

"I mustn't. It wouldn't do. My poor mistress is—"

"At this moment Rosalie entered, and Aunt Patience stopped in her remark to the visitor and turned to the maiden.

"Miss Rose," she said, "here's a woman has come all the way from Princeton to see your mother."

"No, no," interposed the stranger, "I did not say I came from there on purpose to call here."

"I am sorry, my good woman," Rosalie said, kindly; "but you cannot possibly see my mother now. She is very sick."

"Then so much the more need is there that I should see her," the woman urged, modestly, but emphatically. "Will you go to your mother and tell her there is some one here who would speak with her?"

"But if I should do so, who should I tell her had come?"

The stranger hesitated; but finally she said:

"Tell her it is one whom she has known in years long gone."

There was something in the tone and manner in which this was spoken, that made a deep impression upon Rosalie. And then there was an earnest, longing look upon the face which she could not withstand.

"I will go up," she said.

"If you will, your mother shall not blame you."

The maiden immediately turned and left the apartment, having only stopped to take a knife from the dresser—that being the thing for which she had come down.

“An old woman?” said Mrs. Lincoln, as Rosalie delivered her message.

“Yes, mother. She bade me tell you she was one whom you had known in years long gone.”

The dying woman started, and for an instant there was a flush, as of returning life, upon her sunken cheek.

“Let me see her!” she quickly whispered, with strange earnestness. “Bid her come at once, for I have not long to stay here on earth.”

Rosalie hastened down, and having delivered her message, she guided the stranger up to the sick-chamber. But she was not to see or hear what followed, for the woman turned to her ere she had shown her face to the invalid, and said:

“Pardon me—but for your mother’s sake—for your own sake—for my sake—you must not be here now. Trust me, and the time shall come when you shall bless me.”

Again was the maiden deeply moved by that voice and manner. It struck a chord in her bosom which at once gave back a tuneful response; and having kissed her mother, she asked if she should leave her.

“Yes,” the dying one whispered, “leave us alone a while. You shall come soon.”

So the affectionate girl turned from the bed and moved towards the door. She hesitated one moment to gaze upon the stranger. She looked into the aged face, and was almost startled by the expression she saw there. It was not a look of pain, though there was evidently pain in the feelings that produced it. It was a strange look—tremulous and tearful—as though an hundred wild emotions were struggling within, and all awakened upon the instant.

She saw all this in a second of time, and then she turned from the room, and sought the kitchen, where she and Patience talked the strange matter over.

“It must be some relative,” said the old housekeeper, with a look of honest assurance. “My lady has never talked about her relatives. I shouldn’t wonder if it was a sister.”

"But mother has no sisters," replied Rosalie; "she has often told me so."

"It can't be her mother," the keeper said, mysteriously.

"No. Her mother died when she was very young."

"It must be a cousin, then."

"That cannot be; for neither her father nor mother had any brothers or sisters. She has told me of that as a curious circumstance."

"Well—it must be somebody," Aunt Patience added, emphatically.

"I don't think there can be any doubt as to that," responded the girl, with a light smile.

"No—of course not. It must be," pursued the old woman, so intently bent upon the mystery that she did not see the point of Rosalie's admission. "It's somebody come to see your mother—somebody come clean from Princeton. Only think: come all the way a-foot! My stars, mustn't she be tough! I shouldn't want to do it."

And so the conversation went on—Rosalie engaging in it at times, but still paying little or no attention to what was said. Her thoughts were in the sick-chamber, and upon the dial of the great clock in the corner.

The minutes passed away, and at length they became long and tedious. Half an hour had gone—three-quarters—an hour! Why did not the strange visitor come down?

"Presently the sound of feet was heard upon the stairs. Shortly afterwards the door was opened, and the stranger entered. There were tear-marks upon her face; and upon her cloak, about the bosom and shoulders, were marks of wet as though rain had fallen there!

"Rosalie," said the visitor, in a tone soft and pleasing, "your mother would see you at once. Go to her. Here—pardon me—but—"

She had taken the fair girl's hand while she spoke, and drawn her unresistingly towards her; and at this point she broke off by kissing her upon the pure white brow. She spoke not another word—not even to bid Aunt Patience farewell, but quickly turning away, as though she would hide her face, she moved to the outer door and passed out.

"What is that on your cheek?" the housekeeper asked, gazing into Rosalie's face.

"What do you mean?"

"Why—on your cheek. It's a drop of water."

"Then that strange woman left it there!"

"So she did," returned Patience, seeming to remember. "I saw one roll from her cheek on the floor, too, just as she turned away."

It was curious; and so the maiden would have said, had she felt that she had the time. But her presence was needed elsewhere, and she hastened away. When she reached the sick-chamber, she found her mother seemingly asleep. Her cheeks were wet, and the pillow was moist, with tears that had fallen upon it. But she opened her drooping lid as she heard her daughter's step, and new light was beaming in her eyes.

"Who was it, mother?" the maiden asked, taking her old seat by the bedside.

A quick tremor shook the sufferer's frame, and with a look of prayerful meaning, she said:

"Oh! my child, you can never know the deep, heavenly gratitude I owe to God for the privilege which has been granted to me the past hour! The deepest grief to my soul is gone, and I can lay me down now to sleep without the dark presence that has haunted me so long?"

"But who was she, mother?"

"When you know, it must be with—with—her own consent. But that may not be long. You will see her again if life lasts for you both. I cannot tell you—I must not. But believe me—it was a heavenly visitant. Aye—as an angel sent from the Throne of Grace!"

The last few words were spoken not only in a whisper, but in a very low and faint one. She was failing!

"You are not so well, mother!" cried Rosalie, forgetting all else as she noticed the mystic look that passed over her face.

"I am not, dear child, I feel it," the mother replied spasmodically. "Here—feel under my pillow, you will find a package there."

The maiden did as she had been directed, and when she

drew forth her hand she held a sealed packet in it. It was not much larger than a common letter, though covered with what was evidently a stout envelope. It was superscribed to herself, and as she turned it over she saw that the seal had once been broken, and secured again. Instinctively she cast her eyes upon her mother's little *escritoire*, and she found it open, with a pen and piece of wax lying upon it.

"Rosalie," the mother said, struggling hard to speak plainly, for the meeting with the mystic visitor had surely brought a severe shock upon her, "most that is therein contained I wrote long ago, and have kept it until this hour for you. Within that you will find that all you can wish to know. You will find an answer to all question to which I have declined to reply; and I know you will be satisfied. I had supposed the packet would not be opened until after I was gone; but my visitor has opened it, and written something therein. Oh, God be thanked for sending that messenger to me! It was as one come from the upper world to lift the clod of earth from my soul!"

At this point the woman stopped speaking, and closed her eyes. She was growing weaker, and her breath came more low and faint. At the end of some five minutes she opened her eyes again, and with evident effort she resumed in a painful whisper:

"My child, I must exact from you a solemn promise. You shall not open that packet until you are entirely free from all control of your father. When Sir Arthur dies, or when you are free from his control—then you may open it. Will you promise me this? Ask me no questions, for I am governed wholly by a desire for your good. Trust your mother in this, and give her the promise she asks."

Rosalie gazed first upon her mother, and then upon the packet she held. She was anxious, as could be seen by the expression upon her face, but she gave the promise.

"I will obey you to the very letter in this," she said. "I will keep the missive sacredly to myself; and it shall not be opened until I am wholly free from all control of my father. This I will promise—and I bind it by the love I bear you."

As she spoke she bent over and imprinted a warm kiss upon her mother's brow.

"Bless you, my child—bless you! Where is Patience? I would see her."

Rosalie called the old housekeeper at once; and when the latter had reached the bedside the dying woman bade her an affectionate farewell.

"I am going," she said; "and among all the things I leave behind there is but one I can ask you to watch over for me. Will you not help her, if you can, in the hour of need, and give her your hand if danger besets her?"

The faithful servant sank upon her knees, and with tears rolling down her cheeks, she promised to be true to her trust. She did love her kind mistress; and the tears she shed came from the heart.

A few moments of silence followed, during which the invalid breathed very faintly, and with much effort.

"Patience," she said, while an expression of pain passed over her features, "go and tell Sir Arthur I would speak with him."

The servant at once left the room, and when she had gone the mother turned to her child. Rosalie sank down by her side, and took one of her thin hands. She started with alarm, for that hand was very cold!

"Keep the paper, Rose," said the dying mother. "Oh! I wrote it when my heart was heavy and sad. You will find tear-marks upon it! But I know that your love for your mother will lead you to forgiveness. Kiss me, my child."

The weeping girl imprinted an affectionate kiss upon her parent's cheek, and pillowed her head by its side.

"Don't sing so loud, darling."

"Me, mother? I am not singing."

"That sounds better! It sounds sweetly!"

"Mother! mother! Look upon me—speak to me!"

"Keep it, my child. Don't open it till you are free from all danger—Sir Arthur—oh! my husband! Rose, don't curse me! Love me—love me ever!"

"I will, mother!—I will. Open your eyes! Speak!"

There was a motion of the thin, cold hand. Rose looked to see, and found that it had fallen from the bosom. She

raised it up ; but it only fell back again like an arm of lead !

Like the sinking to sleep of an infant had passed the weary, heart-worn pilgrim's soul away ! Her troubles were ended—her great grief swallowed up in the gulf that awaits both the joys and sorrows of all the living!

CHAPTER XIII.

PLANS FOR ANOTHER FLIGHT.

SIR ARTHUR LINCOLN came to the chamber of death. The soul of his partner had been gone almost an hour.

He found Rosalie upon the bed, weeping as though her heart would break ; and her sobs were loud and agonizing.

"How long has she been dead?" the cold, stern man asked.

The child started up, but made no reply. She had heard a voice, but she knew not what had been said.

"How long since your mother died?" Sir Arthur repeated.

"A long time, sir. An hour, sir."

"So long? Then I could not have seen her had I wished. Go to your room, Rosalie, and I will send people up to take care of the body."

"No ! no !—Oh, no !" gasped the poor girl. "Tear me not away now ! Let me stay with her while I can ! You will not send me away !"

"Well, stay then. But you must have a curious taste."

The poor girl was deeply shocked by this unfeeling remark, but she called back her scattered senses as quickly as possible, for a new fear had entered her mind.

"Father," she cried, springing forward and catching him by the sleeve, "do not send any strangers here to touch my dear mother ! Let Aunt Patience and me do it all. Oh, do not send any one yet !"

"But we must have a coffin, and a shroud, and a proper dress."

"We can fix it all. Oh, let us fix it! When it is all done, then they can bring the coffin!"

"Well, I won't interfere here. Take your own way for a few days."

And thus speaking the man left the room.

The thought of having cold, mercenary hirelings come to handle the sacred casket she had dwelt upon so long in love, started Rosalie into new life, and she resolved, with the aid of Aunt Patience, to prepare the mortal remains for their final rest.

The old housekeeper was called, and she seconded the plan heartily. And so the work was commenced. Carefully and tenderly the two mourners moved their hands to the task, weeping and praying in turns; and in whispered accents telling o'er the varied goodness of the departed one.

Patience opened upon the theme of her poor, dear mistress being killed by the harshness of her husband; but Rosalie stopped her.

"Let it pass now," the orphan urged. "If he has it upon his soul, let him be with his God! My mother is at rest—where sorrows can come no more, and where harsh words are never spoken. I would not ask for any punishment upon him who should have been her best earthly friend. Yet the time must surely come when he shall wish he had been a better man. God forgive him!"

At length their work was done. The marble-like form, looking as pure in its final rest as the untrodden snow upon the earth without, was arrayed in a neat robe of white muslin; the hair folded back from the polished brow and hidden beneath the trimming of the lace cap; and the brow itself covered with kisses, invisible to mortal eyes, but seen of angels who note the deeds of love.

At night the two mourners took turns in watching by the tenantless clay, and in the morning men came with the dread coffin, and the loved form was hidden away forever from the gaze of the stricken child. Sir Arthur had caused the top of the narrow house to be made whole, and then the men fastened it on by his orders.

Poor Rose! She begged—she prayed—she entreated—but to no avail. They shut the cruel coffin up, and when

the orphan knew that she should gaze upon that face never again she fled from the room.

Half an hour afterwards Patience sought her, and she found her upon her bed, sobbing and weeping with her heart well-nigh broken !

* * * * *

Pale and almost sick, stood Rosalie Lincoln in the room where her mother had died. The last sad work had been done on the day before ; and she now stood in that apartment, where she had passed so many sweet hours with her who had gone, and, for the first time since the coming of the dark angel, she asked herself what was to be her fate. The question startled her, for it brought back to her mind some fearful threats she had heard.

But she was cut short in her meditations by the entrance of her father. He did not look angry, but still there was a frown upon his brow, and the whole expression of his face was threatening. He motioned her to a seat, and then sat down near her, on the opposite side of the fireplace.

"Well, Rosalie," he said, in a cold, careless tone, "the time has come for deciding the arrangement for the future. There is nothing more to take up your attention here, while elsewhere your presence is needed. What is passed cannot be helped now. It is only a foolish custom which leads people to waste time in mourning, after everything is done that can be done. Your mother is gone, and no doubt she is better off where she is than she could be were she here."

The mourning child was touched to the deepest fount of feeling by these cruel remarks, and as she gazed up into the face of the speaker, the memory of all his harshness—of all his ill-treatment—of all his brutality—the which had surely hastened the hour of her orphanage—she could not have restrained the answer which came to her lips had she wished.

"Surely, she is better off, sir. She was not one who could live in peace with the hatred of one upon her who should have loved and honored her !"

"Ah—you speak very plainly, my young lady !"

"I hope you understand me, then."

As soon as the words were spoken, Rosalie wished she could recall them. But it was too late. They had been spoken, and they must remain in force against her. The father's face became very pale, and the fierce clenching of his hands and teeth told how deeply he was moved. But he made no hasty reply. When he spoke it was in a tone more terrible than any quick burst of passion could have been.

"I *do* understand you, my dear young lady—I understand you very well!—Very well do I understand you. And now suppose we change hands, and *you* take a turn at understanding! I have seen Elroy Pemberton this morning, and he will take you to his home at once! He is desirous of obtaining his wife as soon as possible; and under such circumstances we have made all the necessary arrangements. You will go to his house to-morrow, and in just three days you will be made his wife! Do you understand that?"

"I understand what you say, sir; and I am fully persuaded that under other circumstances you might carry this plan out. But I will not so dishonor you as to believe that you could so far violate every principle of humanity as to tear a child from her retirement of mourning to assume the bridal array!"

"You don't believe I could, eh?"

"I cannot believe it, sir."

"Then you shall await the demonstration. In four days I shall go to New York; and I may be gone some time; but before I go I shall see you the wife of Elroy!"

"Impossible, sir!"

"Not at all, my lady. There is but one event can put a stop to it,—and that is another death. As sure as there is a man bearing the name I have spoken, so sure shall this come to pass! Now prepare as soon as you please!"

Rosalie had at first thought this threat only the result of sudden anger, but she thought so no more. She knew her father too well for that. She knew that he would carry out his plan if possible. She bowed her head upon her hands, and the strength she had summoned for the meeting all departed. As soon as she began to weep the hard-hearted man turned from the chamber.

He had been gone but a few minutes when Aunt Patience entered.

"Marcy sakes alive! I thought he'd stay here till doomsday! I've been a-waitin', my dear Rosey, this half hour. Andrew Van Ruter is down below, and he wants to see you."

"Go and tell him I'll be right down," quickly returned the maiden.

Rosalie washed her face, but she could not wash away the pallor that had come upon her cheeks, nor could she hide the deep crimson of her swollen eyes. But she cared not for that now. She hastened down as soon as possible, and found Andrew waiting for her. He was a young man, not over five-and-twenty, possessing a handsome, frank countenance, and a frame of much muscular power.

"Oh, you are the very one I most wished to see!" the maiden cried, as she caught him by the hand.

"And you are the very one I wished to see," returned the young man. "I am going to Elizabethtown to-night, if I can get away."

"If you can get away? Is there any doubt?"

"Why—of course the British will not allow it if they know it, for they suspect that I am not friendly to them. However—there'll be no trouble. I have it all arranged. And now what word shall I convey to Robert!"

"Tell him that my father has sworn that I shall marry with Elroy in three days. Tell him it is meant so to be."

"To-day is Monday. Then he meant that you shall be married on Thursday?"

"Yes; for on Thursday he starts for New York, and he will see me married—he means to see me married—before he goes. Tell Robert this; and tell him too, that I—"

The maiden stopped, for a strange idea had come to her mind. She trembled violently for a few moments, and then, seizing Andrew nervously by the arm, she uttered:

"Oh! if you would save me from a fate worse than death take me with you! I can assume a disguise—I can bear up bravely—I can do anything, anything. Oh, do not say nay! Let me go!"

The young man was for a few moments undecided how

to proceed, but a glance into the upturned face of the imploring girl—a glance at that prayerful, heart-broken look of agony, decided him.

“I will do all I can, Rosalie,” he said, earnestly and fervently, “come with me, and I will protect you while I have life!”

“Oh, bless you! bless you,” the fair girl ejaculated, resting her head upon his shoulder for a moment.

And during that moment Andrew Van Ruter resolved that he would die, if need be, in her defense. He loved her well. And in his heart there was a smoldering fire which might have burned into a brighter, warmer flame, could it have had but the answering spark from her bosom. But he loved Robert Pemberton, too; and in the nobleness of his soul he knew no jealousy; and if, at times, he wished that Rosalie’s heart could have been all his own, he only sighed and resolved that he would show his love through a privilege, and rest content with the possession of her rich gratitude and sisterly affection.

“I have made arrangements to start off at eight o’clock this evening,” he said; “and I will meet you at any place you may designate.”

“Let me be governed by your plans,” returned the maiden. “I will meet you wherever you say.”

“Then let it be at my house. Be there at half-past seven, if you can, and I think we may get away without much trouble. We shall have to go on foot some distance, as it would not be safe to take horses from here.”

“I can walk easily. I am strong; and in such a cause I could stand much.”

So it was arranged that Rosalie should be at Andrew’s house at half-past seven, and then the young man took his leave.

As soon as he was gone the unhappy girl began to think of visiting Clara Pemberton. She wished to see her very much, and she felt it to be her duty, too. But should she go out without asking? She pondered upon this point awhile, and finally concluded that she had better keep her plan to herself. If she asked her father he would surely refuse her; for he hated Clara as he did all Patriots

She went at once to her apartment and prepared to go out ; and having put on her hood and shawl she returned to the kitchen and went out the back way. She had gone but a short distance when she discovered that she was followed by a British soldier. She walked on faster, and he did the same ; then she slackened her pace, and he slackened his. Still he did not show any disposition to stop her, and she kept on.

She reached the dwelling of the Widow Reed, and knocked at the door. The lady herself answered the summons, and Rosalie asked to see Clara Pemberton. The widow seemed to hesitate at first, but finally she bade the girl to enter. The latter cast her eyes about as she stepped upon the threshold, and saw that the soldier had stopped within a few rods of the door, and was evidently watching her. But she stepped in at once, and was soon in the room with Clara.

The meeting between those two loving, faithful beings was deeply affecting, and for a long time their conversation was upon the subject of Rosalie's recent bereavement. At length, however, the latter broached the other subject that lay near her heart. She told her plan, and also explained why she meant to take the step.

"And you will see Robert !" the fond sister said eagerly.

"Yes—I hope to. I am not free yet ; but I shall strain every nerve. Oh, if you could go with me !"

"Not yet," returned Clara, contentedly. "It might ruin all were you to take another with you. The escape of my brother is joy enough for the present ; and then, again, I am in no immediate danger. Colonel Lyndarm is at present engaged in some sort of topographical work, and will not be here for a week. I feel under no apprehension. I have a plan of escape projected which will work well, I am assured. I am armed, too ; and in case of final necessity—should it come to the fatal moment—I shall not hesitate to strike him down ! I have studied the consequences, and am willing to abide by them. Yet I will escape, if I can."

There was an air of calm, dignified assurance about the

speaker that impressed her visitor with a sense of reliance upon her courage and fortitude, which mere words could not have given.

The two girls conversed awhile longer, and then Rosalie arose to take her leave. She had become happily assured that her friend was not in immediate danger, and she furthermore had received a message for Robert to the effect that his sister would join him at Elizabethtown within two weeks.

When the visitor reached the street she saw the soldier standing just where she had last seen him. She passed on close by him, and when she had gone a short distance she found that he was again following her. For the first time the thought burst upon her that she was under strict surveillance! It came with an unpleasant effect; but upon reflection she thought that she might have reason to be thankful that she had discovered it thus early, for now she could exercise more care than she might otherwise have done.

When she reached the door of her father's dwelling she saw the soldier pass around to the front of the house. She went at once to her own room, and when she had put off her outer garments, and fixed the fire, she sat down and reflected upon the course she should pursue. She knew very well that a guard had been placed over her, and that she could not leave the house without being followed unless she could manage to get away in some secret manner. She thought of many plans, but upon inspection they proved unsafe. Finally, she hit upon the idea of assuming the disguise of a soldier. Many such were constantly coming and going to and from the house, and she believed she could get away thus. At all events, her mind settled down upon that plan. She only waited now for the coming of night.

The dark curtain at length fell upon the earth, and Rosalie glided up into the garret where the condemned uniforms were. She selected one which she thought would answer, and then returned to her chamber. She dared not put it on yet, for if her father should call upon her all would be lost. So she waited until the clock struck seven,

and then she donned the strange attire, making her own clothes up into a bundle to take along with her.

So far all was well ; but the hardest was yet to come. The poor girl trembled, but she did not falter. She thought of Elroy Pemberton—of the curse that must fall upon her if she stayed—and she asked God to give her strength !

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DIE IS CAST !

BACK from the house of Sir Arthur, as we have before stated, extended an L. Beyond this, and connected with it, was a long shed which could be closed tight ; and beyond this still, and forming a right angle by the two fronts, was a large barn. To the L and the shed there were back-doors, though they were not used in the winter, as they only opened into the kitchen-garden. A passageway extended from the house to the barn.

Rosalie had planned to make her way to the barn, if she found no one there ; but if any one should be there, then she meant to leave by one of the garden-doors.

As soon as she had prepared her bundle she took the money her mother had given her—some three hundred dollars in gold,—and the few jewels which had been family keepsakes upon her mother's side for several generations ; and then left her room. She glided carefully along, stopping ever and anon to listen, until she reached the kitchen, where she found Aunt Patience.

"You are going," the old woman said, half sadly.

"Yes," the maiden replied. "Is the way clear ?"

"I haven't seen anybody go out since dark."

Rosalie rested her head upon her old friend's bosom a moment, exchanged affectionate kisses with her, and then kept on her way. She passed through the long shed, feeling her way along slowly and carefully ; and when she reached the door of the barn she stopped to listen. She could hear the horses stamping and pawing, and the cows

rattling their horns against their stanchions ; but she could hear no human voice.

When she had become satisfied that no one was within, she pulled back the little slide, put her arm in, and unhasped the door, and having opened it she glided in. It was very dark in there—too dark to see anything at all save the glass window close by her. The horses set up a loud whinnying, and for awhile she feared they would expose her ; but she stopped not for this.

After groping for some time, she found the back-door of the barn—the one which opened into the yard, and having unhasped this, she passed out. The snow was all trodden down here, as the animals had to come out into the yard after their water ; so she easily made her way across, and soon climbed over the fence. But here the passage was more difficult. The snow was deep and untrodden, and in many places piled up in high banks.

The girl's plan now was to flee across the lower or back part of the garden, and so on across the next one, which belonged to a neighbor, and from thence to the road, going beyond said neighbor's house. With this intent she started on. It was a severe trial, but she did not falter. At times she was in the snow to her waist, wallowing and plunging along with the utmost difficulty, and anon she would come to a space where the trackless path was easier. She reached the yard of her neighbor, and here she sat down to rest, for her breath was well-nigh spent. Her heart beat furiously, and her strength seemed all gone.

At length she started on again, and was soon in the road. The way was now plain and easy. The home of Van Ruter was not far distant, she having gained over half-way already. She gave one quick look behind her, and she thought she saw a man coming towards her. But what of that ? There were many people passing to and fro at this time of the evening.

She sped on ; she had reached the gate of the little yard before her friend's house, and was about to put her hand upon the latch, when she heard a step behind her. She turned—and saw a British soldier only a few feet off.

"Can you tell me where there is a doctor, comrade?" the fellow said.

"I do not know, sir," the maiden replied.

"Why do you *sir* me! Ah, my dear girl, private troopers are not wont to be so polite to each other!"

As he thus spoke he placed his hand upon her arm, and drew her towards him. But even in that moment of agony and fear intense, she had a noble presence of mind. Her first impulse was to call out for help, or, at all events, to shriek; but on the instant she knew that Andrew would come to her aid if he heard her, and then he, too, might be prevented from leaving town.

First she tried with all her power to tear herself away. But her captor was a strong, muscular fellow, and his grip was like a vice upon her arm.

"Why do you interrupt me thus?" she gasped, for the first time turning her face towards him.

"Because I am ordered so to do," the man replied.

"Ordered? By whom?"

"By your father."

Rosalie had recognized a soldier whom she had often seen at the house, and she knew that any farther attempt at deception would be useless; so she resolved to appeal to his sympathy.

"Oh, sir!" she implored, in a low, prayerful tone, "I know you can have no ill-feelings towards me!"

"On the contrary, lady, I have the best of feelings for you."

"Then you will not carry me back to certain death! For I could not live under the terrible curse they would put upon me! Oh, let me go, and I will—"

"Stop, lady. This is all of no use. I must take you back with me, and for several reasons. First, your father will punish me severely if I let you go. My companion knows that I have seen you, for I told him of it just after I saw you leave the barn."

"Did you see me leave the barn?"

"Oh, yes. I saw you leave your chamber, too; and I knew you were dressed in men's clothes."

"You did?" uttered Rosalie, in alarm; for she dreamed not that any one had seen her when she dressed.

"Yes. I saw your shadow upon the white curtain of your window. I knew that you alone were there, and when I saw that shadow thrown upon the curtain, I know it must be your own. I knew when you left the room; and after that I watched for your exit. You know the first reason. The second is,—I don't think you should throw yourself away upon a rank Rebel!"

A quick, bitter reply was upon the indignant girl's lips as she heard this remark; but she kept it to herself. She still begged of him to set her free; but it was of no use.

"You will let me speak with these people here—with a female friend of mine—will you not?" she asked, when she had become assured that she could gain nothing else.

"I couldn't do it, my dear lady."

"Not speak one moment with a friend? Will you be so cruel?"

"I don't know how it is; but somehow you don't look like a young girl in that dress; and I can't feel that tenderness I might feel for a gown and bonnet. However I don't know as it can do any harm to let you speak with a woman."

"Of course there can be no harm. Let me see her one moment."

"She expects you, does she?"

"Yes, sir—though she knows not how, or why, I was coming." •

"But will you give me your pledge of honor not to make any attempt to escape?"

"I will, sir, readily."

"Mind you, now,—you will take no advantage which may be offered you? You promise to return with me?"

"I give you my honor that I will, sir,"

"Very well. Then let us go in. I must keep you in sight."

So they went in, and when they reached the door, Rosalie knocked. It happened very fortunately that Kate answered the summons, for had Andrew come he would surely have attacked the soldier; and thus an alarm might have been given which would have placed him in durance,

as it afterwards appeared that a second soldier was close by.

"It is Rose," quickly cried our heroine, as she saw the startled look upon Kate's face. "I can not come. I am detected, and must return." And then she added, in a lower tone,—*"Tell Andrew to do as we had planned. He will tell Robert all. I am to be married Thursday if we live! Yet I will do all I can. If they can do anything—"*

"Look here," uttered the soldier, "you'll have to speak a little louder. There may be treason in your whisperings!"

"I have nothing more to say, sir; but you may be assured we have spoken no treason."

Kate caught her friend around the neck and imprinted a warm kiss upon her cheek, and then bade her a God's blessing!

"Look here," said the trooper, in a tone which he meant should be very witty, "that's a foolish wasting of kisses. Suppose you try it on my cheek?"

"Look ye, my man," returned Rosalie, trembling with utter indignation, "I'll tell you what I will do; Major O'Harra shall teach you manners!"

Now Rosalie knew that this fellow was one of the major's servants; and he knew that the major was very fond of the maiden.

"No, no!" he entreated, in a tone of sudden fear. "I meant nothing. You wouldn't do that after I've granted ye this privilege."

"Then be civil, sir."

"I can do that. But come—we'll be moving."

Rosalie had no more to wait for, and she turned away and followed the soldier from the garden. At the next corner they were joined by a second soldier, who had been concealed there by the angle of the fence.

Alas! it was a bitter walk for poor Rosalie! Her heart was heavy and sad, and the bright kindling of hope had died away, leaving only despair in her bosom!

When she reached the house from whence she had fled, she found her father awaiting her in the hall. He gazed

upon her as she instinctively stopped before him, and finally said :

"Rosalie, you may go to your room. I trust you will not take another walk this evening, because these men have enough else to do besides following you."

And thus speaking he turned away.

Rosalie had anticipated a sharp, angry reproof ; and she would much rather have had it than to have heard the cool, sarcastic, heartless remarks he made. But she went to her room, and when once there she placed her hands upon her bosom and gazed vacantly upon the floor.

Where was the chance of escape now ! Alas—where ? To leave the house was impossible. She knew that ; and the thought was passed over to be entertained no more.

"That hope is gone—gone forever !" she murmured to herself ; and as she spoke she arose and threw off the disguise she had assumed. When she had once more donned her own garb, Aunt Patience came to see her.

"I was afeared ye couldn't do it," the old woman said, as she took a seat, and placed her arm about Rosalie's neck. "I was afeared they'd find ye. Oh, I'm sorry, darlin' ! I'm real sorry."

"I know you are, aunt ; I know you are," the unhappy girl replied. "But it's too late now. Alas ! I see no more hope ! I must be made the wretched being they have planned to make me !"

"But can't ye do somethin', Rose ? Can't ye contrive to git away from 'em ?"

"How can I ?" the maiden asked, with an earnestness that seemed to show that she hoped Patience might think of something that would help her.

"I'm sure I don't know ; but then it does seem as though somethin' might be done. Don't it seem so to you ?"

"Not now, aunt. It did seem so an hour ago, but it seems so no more."

"Well—it's hard. I declare, it does seem as though you ought to be protected. I wish I was a man—that's all I wish."

"And what would you do ?" asked Rosalie, almost smiling at the quaint earnestness of the old lady.

"What would I do? I'd do somethin' plaguey quick now, you'd better believe. I'd learn 'em that everybody wa'n't a-goin' to kneel to 'em. That's what I'd do! P'r'haps ye don't think so?"

"I do think so, Aunt Patience; for I know how good you are, and how kind you would be to anybody who deserved your aid. I know it all. But, alas! I can see no way in which you can help me now."

"Neither can I, Rose; but—I wish I could."

The maiden placed her arm about the neck of her friend and kissed her; and the tears that stood in her eyes told that she appreciated the love thus manifested.

"I know you would quickly do all you could," she said; "and I surely feel all the gratitude I could feel were it done as you wish."

"Thank you, Miss Rose. I know you— Ha!—who's that callin'? Wasn't it somebody callin' me?"

"Yes—'tis father."

"I wonder what he wants," the old housekeeper snapped out, as she arose to answer the call.

She left the room. And at the end of half an hour Rosalie heard a whisper at her door.

"Is that you, Aunt Patience?" she asked.

"Yes, Rose—it's poor old Aunt Patience," the faithful keeper returned, in a hoarse whisper. "Your father has forbid me from comin' into your room any more. He says I'm full of rebellion. He says if I do come in 'twill be worse for you; so I won't do it. But I'll see ye agin, Rose, darlin'—I'll see ye agin. When ye git settled down I'll come. Good-night! God bless ye!"

Rosalie heard a deep sob as the woman turned away, and she was much moved. She would have spoken some word in reply, but the visitor had turned away ere she had an opportunity to collect her thoughts. She heard the sound of the departing footsteps die away in the distance, and then she threw herself upon her bed.

It was a severe blow. In one sense the severest she had yet received; for it opened clearly to her the fact that for her her father had no spark of compassion. And up to the present moment, too, there had been a lingering, undefined

shadow of some possibility of salvation. There had been no direct hope—only a sort of prayerful longing for deliverance, founded upon the little human kindness which might be lingering in her father's bosom. But even this shadowy solace was now removed, and she could only give herself up to despair.

The night passed away—a sleepless night of agony and prayer; and in the morning Rosalie arose, and looked out upon the snow-covered earth. The sun was up, and the sky was cloudless. Upon the windows the frost had gathered in fantastic shapes, and those who moved without were closely muffled up, and hurried on their way as though they would escape the intense cold that so unceremoniously nipped their ears and cheeks. The maiden gazed out awhile, but the sharp, frosty state of the atmosphere soon reminded her that she had no fire; and, having thrown on her clothes, she went into the little sitting-room where her mother used to sit, and where Patience had been wont to build a fire the first thing in the morning. She opened the door and looked in. She started back, for her father sat there by the fire.

“Rosalie—I have been waiting for you,” he said.

She did not dare to retreat; so, having overcome the trepidation caused by this unexpected meeting, she passed in, and closed the door behind her. Sir Arthur waited until she had taken a seat, and then he said:

“I have come, Rosalie, to inform you that I shall be ready to accompany you to Mr. Pemberton's at ten o'clock this forenoon. You will be ready at that time. You can have your things ready, and they shall be sent over. As for your dowry, that shall be arranged when I return from New York, where I am going in part to make arrangements for raising the money. Of course you will be ready. Remember—precisely at ten.”

Rosalie did not answer immediately. She gazed into her father's face until she had fairly recovered her scattered thoughts, and then she said, with a look and tone of tearless agony:

“Father, for many weeks I have watched by the bedside of my dying mother, an anxious, unhappy child. My soul

has been tortured by fear, and my heart has been pained by a grief that I may not tell. And now that mother is gone from us, and I am left in sadness and in mourning, my heart is not yet healed of its deep wound, and even the fatigue of body is not overcome. I am hardly returned from my mother's grave, when you ask me to assume the duties of a bride ! You ask me to come up from a grief the deepest a child can feel, and give my heart to one whom you have chosen to be my husband ! How can I do that now ? I cannot. You will not push this matter with such haste. I ask you not to reverse your ultimate plans—I only ask you, implore you, to give me time to quell the turmoil of my agony. Oh, you will not refuse me this ? It is only a matter of time, and in that time lie all the withered hopes of my life ! ”

“ We have arranged for all that,” coolly replied Sir Arthur. “ Elroy has promised that, after you are married, he will give you all the time you wish for mourning ; and during that period he will not intrude upon your privacy.”

“ And why is this ? ” cried the maiden eagerly. “ If such is his intent, then why will he not grant me that time before marriage ? ”

“ Do you think me a blind man or an idiot ? ” asked the baronet, quickly and almost savagely.

“ Neither—neither,” whispered Rosalie trembling.

“ Then answer me this : if we give you one month, or two months, or more, will you give me your word of honor that, at the end of the period named, you will become the wife of Elroy Pemberton, and that you will not take advantage of any opportunity that may offer itself for escape ? ”

Rosalie did not answer. She trembled violently, and her eyes were bent to the floor.

“ Why do you not answer ? ” the father asked, at the end of some seconds.

“ I can not,” was the trembling, faintly-spoken response.

“ Then you will not give the promise ? ”

How could she when her every prayer to God was for the opportunity of escape ? She could not, and she plainly told him so.

“ Then,” resumed the parent, “ you see why we can not

grant your request. We know very well that you only look for an opportunity to escape, so that you may marry with that condemned Rebel ! And we know, too, that you would not hesitate at anything which could help you in your plan. Knowing this we have resolved that you shall be married on the day after to-morrow, and then, if you manage to escape while your husband grants you a season of quiet mourning, you cannot marry with any one else, and he can also claim you by law wherever he can find you ! You understand it now. Remember," he added, rising from his chair, at ten o'clock, precisely, you will be ready !" And thus speaking he left the room.

Rosalie saw it all now. She saw now why she was to be so hastily married, and she saw, too, that under such circumstances any prayer of hers would be unavailing. The movement on their part was not, after all, one of vengeance wholly ; but it was one of absolute necessity to the consummation of their plans. It was simply to be an effective barrier to her escape !

To think of freedom from these agonizing bonds now would be simply to clasp an empty shadow !

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE LION'S DEN.

ROSALIE heard the clock strike nine, and she knew that she must be moving. If she failed to be prepared, then she would have to go unprepared. She went to her chamber and commenced to gather up such things as she felt were hers to take. She had resolved that she would not shed a tear ; but when she came to the little souvenirs which her mother had left, her grief would not be restrained. Every article called back to her mind some season of joy with the loved one who was gone from her earthly companionship forever ; and she sank down and wept.

But time flew on, and the unhappy girl knew that she must work though every nerve were a point of sorrow, and every cord stung with agony. She had but few things to

select, and when the clock struck ten she was ready. Her clothing she had packed into a large chest ; and the other articles—of jewelry and ornament, and a few choice books, all wet with tears—she had placed in the inlaid escritoire which had been her mother's.

In a very few minutes after the clock had struck Sir Arthur came. He saw that his child was ready, and an expression of relief passed over his features. It was not an expression of anything like pleasure, or gratitude ; but only the result of relief from a fear that he might have further trouble with her. He informed her that a sledge was at the door, and without a word she put on her hood and cloak and followed him down. When they had reached the hall he asked her if she had anything besides the chest to come down.

"The escritoire," she said.

"Escritoire ?" he repeated. "I did not know that you had one."

"It was my mother's," the poor girl answered, frightened with the fear that it would be taken from her.

And she was almost sure that such was his intent ; but when he saw the startled look upon her face he seemed to keep back something he would have said, and turning to two men who stood near the door, he bade them go up and bring down the articles they had heard mentioned. The chest and escritoire were soon in the sledge, and then Rosalie was conducted to a seat behind them. Her father took his place by her side, and the team was driven off.

At the distance of a mile they came to a large house, the appearance of which betokened a wealthy owner. The maiden was conducted to the door, and a servant led both her and her father to the parlor, where they found Mr. Richard Pemberton.

As we have said before, this Richard was the brother of Robert's father ; and when the latter died Robert and Clara had been taken beneath his roof ; and there they had found a home until the breaking out of the war. Robert had at first expressed his patriotic proclivities, and when his uncle found that he was fixed in that principle of faith and action he turned both him and Clara from his doors. But there

was another motive which he did not reveal. The keeping of the sister was an expense which he wished to be rid of, so he made their political faith the ostensible cause of their banishment. He was a mercenary man—a miser of heart—but far from being as wealthy as people thought. The union of his only son with Rosalie Lincoln was a pecuniary arrangement which he was very anxious to consummate. Sir Arthur had promised to settle twenty thousand dollars upon his daughter, and that was a sum nearly four times as large as Richard Pemberton could have raised without selling off some of his property. He had a good estate—one of the most valuable in the Jerseys—but unfortunate speculations had swallowed up most of his ready money.

He was a stout, heavy man, with a large, broad head, which was thickly covered with stone-gray hair; small, cold, gray eyes; and the lower features of the face heavy and flabby. There was a coarseness about him which no amount of dress or effort could cover up.

Such was Richard Pemberton. He received the baronet with the most flattering smiles he could command; and then he turned to the maiden.

"Miss Rosalie," he said, assuming a kind, fatherly tone, which might have passed for a natural feeling had it not been so much overdone, "I am most happy to see you. Believe me when I say that your presence already sheds a genial warmth upon our household. I cannot but feel that this moment is the herald of many seasons of joy and gladness. May I not hope that we shall find new happiness now that you have come?"

Had Rosalie been ignorant of the speaker's true character she might have been favorably moved by this speech; but she knew him too well; and she might have given him no answer had she not at that moment met a threatening look from her father.

"I hope I shall be happy," she said, faintly.

"Ah—you shall—you shall. You shall be very happy. Your apartment is all ready, with a good fire in it. We had it aired this morning. I'll have you shown up at once."

Thus speaking the host went to the inner corner of the room and pulled the bell-cord, and in a few moments after-

wards a servant appeared, who was directed by her master to show the young lady to her chamber.

After she was gone the two men seated themselves near the fire. They were silent a little while; but Pemberton broke the ice by asking:

"How does she seem to take it?"

"Well—she is more reasonable about it than I had expected. She pleaded pretty hard at first; and also tried pretty hard to escape; but she's got cooled down now. She knows what's got to come, and I think she will prepare for it with as good a grace as possible."

"I hope she will," resumed the host. "Now I could train a child of my own as sharply as I needed to; but with the child of another it is different."

"And yet," suggested the baronet, "you must carry a steady hand with her—and a firm one, too. If she thought she could move your sympathies she would give you no peace. Her dowry shall be forthcoming."

"Oh—ah—I hope you don't think I care for the money part of it," cried Pemberton, with admirable honesty of look and tone.

"I know you do not," replied Sir Arthur, who knew very well that he spoke falsely as he said it. "I know you do not. But still twenty thousand dollars is something; and it will relieve you of some anxiety touching your son's future prospects."

"Oh, certainly, certainly, Sir Arthur. For Elroy's sake I am glad. I have enough—plenty—but at present it is so situated that I cannot command it at will. I shall be firm with her—fear not."

"If you do not feel like assuming the whole, you may tell her that you are simply carrying out her father's orders. You understand?"

"Yes;—and I think it a good plan. But I hope she won't try to escape—to run away from my house."

"You need be under no apprehension on that score," said the baronet, with a meaning nod of the head. "I shall attend to that. I shall see that she is watched until she is married."

"Does she know it?"

"No."

"Well—she'll find it out if she attempts to make off, I suppose."

"She'll be very likely to."

"I suppose you have not changed the plan of having the wedding come off day after to-morrow?"

"No. It must come off then, for I must go to New York as soon as the ceremony is over. I had planned to go to-day; but I have concluded to wait until I see her the wife of your son."

"Of course you would not be away at such a time. I should feel at a loss if you were not present."

"I shall be there."

"Have you engaged the clergyman?"

"Yes. It is all fixed."

"Then I shall have no trouble on that score?"

"None at all. But where is Elroy now?"

"He is with General Howe."

"Ah—I did not see him," said the baronet. "What has he to do with the general?"

"Didn't you know that my son had been raising a company of Royalists?" asked Pemberton, quite proudly.

"No," returned Lincoln. "How long has he been so engaged."

"Oh, some time. He has been at work in the vicinity of Newark, and has got up a company of fifty men, who will come on and join the Royal troops some time within two months. He has received a captain's commission; and has the promise of promotion."

"I am glad of that, really," said Lincoln, emphatically. "I love to see our young men show a laudable zeal for their king."

"Yes—it shows them to be honest and worthy," added Pemberton, with a touch of pride. "Elroy has been very successful, and he tells me that he has enlisted only the best of men—all stout, honest fellows."

"He must be careful," suggested the baronet, "for the Rebels are on the watch for all who show any disposition to side with the British."

"No—he's safe there," returned the host, with perfect

assurance. "In the first place, he has prepared a disguise which no mortal eye could see through ; and then he has his meetings in places to which all the Rebels of the Jerseys could not penetrate. I tell you Elroy is witty."

"Oh, I am sure of that," responded Sir Arthur. "Were I not persuaded that he was an honest, capable youth, I should not thus—"

The remark was cut short by the entrance of the very one of whom they were speaking. He entered with a hurried movement, and was about to pass directly through when he noticed Sir Arthur. He stopped, and having greeted the visitor, he would have passed on had not his father detained him.

Elroy Pemberton was a tall, well-formed man, twenty-eight years of age, and not by any means ill-looking. His hair and eyes were both black, and his features very regular; but there was a cold, wicked expression upon his face which could not escape the observation of any one who watched him narrowly. It was not a brutal look ; nor was it a result of any swaying passion, or of dissipation. It was a calm, heartless, calculating expression, taking its most striking point from the snake-like, glittering glance of the eye. It was one of those looks which would strike terror to the soul of a helpless person who should see it in the face of his enemy. Yet he could be very pleasing as a companion, and had many friends.

"My son," said the host, "Mr. Lincoln has brought his daughter with him."

"Ah !" uttered the young man, with sudden energy. "Has he brought her to stop with us ?"

"I have," said Sir Arthur, gazing upon Elroy with a look of commendation. "And," he added with a smile, "I hope very soon to see her under your charge for life."

"Thank you, sir," replied the favored suitor. "I shall consider it the happiest hour of my life that gives to me the hand of your lovely child. And, sir, I hope in after years I may prove to you how grateful I can be for your kindness."

"I know you will—I know you will," the baronet said, almost enthusiastically.

"But," resumed Elroy, "I shall have to leave you for the present. I am ordered by Sir William to go to Newark without delay."

"To Newark?" repeated his father. "For what?"

"To have an eye kept upon some Rebels there. Information has just been brought in that quite a number of them are at work about the vicinity, and that they have a large store of arms and ammunition."

"Have you got to stop any time?"

"No. I shall reach there to-night some time, and have all my business done before two o'clock in the morning. My company are to assemble at their rendezvous at midnight, so I shall find them ready for me. After that I may rest until daylight, and then start for home, arriving here to-morrow afternoon."

"That will answer," remarked Sir Arthur. "We have planned to have the marriage come off on the day after to-morrow. You won't fail to be on hand?"

"Oh, no. I should not very willingly miss that."

"You will see Rosalie before you go?" suggested his father.

"Yes—I must."

"Then go right up to her room. You will find her there."

"Thank you," returned the young man; and with this he left the room.

Rosalie sat by the comfortable fire, and her thoughts were with her dead mother. She watched the smoke as it curled up from the burning wood, and she thought how like human hopes it was. She did not hear the footsteps that came nigh; but she heard a rap upon her door, and she bade the applicant enter.

She gazed up, and saw Elroy Pemberton! A quick, cold shudder passed through her frame, and she instinctively placed her left hand upon her heart.

"Rosalie—my dearest love," the young man said, as he approached and put out his hand, "this is happiness indeed. I had not hoped for—"

He stopped, for the maiden did not offer to take the extended hand. She saw the sudden gleam of passion in his

glittering eyes, and under the influence of the fear which it caused she reached forth and placed her hand within his grasp. His touch was cold as ice, and it chilled her to the heart.

"I heard you were here," he resumed, "and, of course, I could not leave the house again without seeing you. Ah, Rosalie, we are soon to realize the full fruition of our hopes."

The poor girl sat there, trembling like an aspen, but she did not speak. She could not yet, for she knew not what to say. She dared not give utterance to her real feelings, and she could not say what she did not feel.

"You were aware that we are to be married on Thursday?" Elroy continued, with a pretty strong spice of impatience in his tone and manner.

"Yes, sir," she answered, without looking up.

"You must feel sad in your great bereavement, love; but you shall have time for mourning. You will not be expected to appear happy and gay while this season of mourning lasts. But you will by and by be cheerful and joyous in my companionship, will you not?"

What should she reply? She could not say yes; for then she would be held to her promise.

"Alas!" she murmured, "you know not what you ask. Were the human heart a thing to be bent and curbed at will I might answer you, yes; but it is not so. I have no more power over my heart than I have over the stars of heaven."

"But the heart must be joyful in the companionship of one it loves."

Rosalie gazed up as the young man thus spoke, but she was silent.

"You surely mean to love me?" he resumed.

"Oh, Elroy—as a friend—as a brother—yes. But no more! no more!"

"How? Will you not after all give me the heart I have so long sought?"

"Mercy! mercy!" the unhappy girl ejaculated, sinking upon her knees, and clasping her hands. Oh! spare me from the fatal blow!"

"What fatal blow? What do you call a fatal blow?" demanded Elroy angrily.

Rosalie gazed fearfully up, but she dared not answer. Baffled and overcome at every turn, and held a guarded prisoner, she dared not even speak her mind! All this coming immediately upon the terrible loss she had sustained, seemed to crush her spirit, and sink her bruised heart. Every word spoken now, which could call forth anger in the bosom of him who was to be her husband, would be sure to be visited in vengeance upon her in after-days. She knew Elroy Pemberton well!

"You cannot answer me, eh?" uttered the suitor, between his clenched teeth. "I know your meaning, however. You would quickly enough give to my cousin the answer I seek! Aye—the pledge I ask in vain you would gladly bestow upon him! I understand you! But I have neither the time nor inclination to bandy words now. Business calls me away until to-morrow, and then I will see you again. In the meantime I trust you will become more wise. You can imagine how well I should like to know that the heart of my wife was set upon another! Be sure that your own weal will demand a different bearing after our union!"

With this he turned away and left the room. The maiden knew his meaning well; and she knew, too, how impossible it would be to induce him to relinquish her hand. He had two incentives to the union, either one of which would have been all-sufficient to determine him. The first was, a sweet, long-sought revenge upon her and Robert; and the second was, her dowry of twenty thousand dollars! The strong motive powers in the human soul: *Revenge* and *Avarice*!

Sir Arthur and Elroy left the house together, the former to return to his home, and the latter to repair to the quarters of his Troy band, and there plot for the destruction of Rebels.

Rosalie remained in her chamber and felt that the earth was no longer a home for her! The thought came to her, and she could not drive it off: the thought of being Elroy Pemberton's wife, or being—where her mother was! She

had gazed out from her window and seen the same soldier who had captured her the night before, on post not far from her ! Surely she was not to escape alive.

The day passed, and the night came. The night passed — a night of sleepless agony—and the day came again. The hours sped on, and finally the doomed girl moved her chair to the window and watched for the return of him whose presence was to her as is the angel of death to the soul that would live !

CHAPTER XVI.

ON A NEW TRAIL.

WE left Robert Pemberton and Karmel at the house of a friend not far from Elizabethtown. This friend's name was Adam Warner. He was a farmer, in the prime of life, powerful in frame, and stout and true of heart. He opened the door gladly to the fugitives, and when he did so he was prepared to defend them with his life.

"But explain this," he said, as he led them to the kitchen, and closed the door behind them. "I want to know what you mean galloping over the country with them cut-throat regimentals on. I swow, ye don't look like men a bit."

Karmel quickly explained the matter by telling the story of the capture of himself and friend, and their subsequent escape.

"Well," cried Adam, with an emphatic slap of the hands, "that's what I call some punkins !—I do, I swow !"

"Then suppose you build a fire," suggested the scout, with a light laugh.

"Guess I will ; and have sunth'n warmin', too," returned the big-hearted host, seizing the shovel as he spoke, and raking open the great heap of ashes against the chimney-back.

The huge back-log had become one solid mass of live coal, and upon breaking it to pieces quite a fire was already

at hand. But the fuel was in the corner, and ere many minutes a broad, cheerful flame was leaping up the wide-mouthed chimney, and sending its genial glow into the room. The next movement was to put on the tea-kettle; and then a stately decanter, a sugar-bowl, and three large tumblers, were brought forth.

Ere long the kettle began to sing its homely song, and Adam Warner arose and commenced operations. Into each of the tumblers he poured a goodly potion from the decanter; then he added sugar; then he lifted off the tea-kettle and poured in the hot water; then he produced a grater and a nutmeg; and in a few moments the three inner men were undergoing a cheering process which the times not only sanctioned, but almost sanctified.

It was now near morning, and Adam called his good wife and had breakfast prepared. The meal was eaten by candle-light, though when 'twas finished the first gray streak of dawn was visible in the east.

A fire was built in the little front room, and as soon as it was sufficiently warm in there to be comfortable, the worthy host conducted his two guests thither. As he closed the door behind him and took a seat, his face assumed an earnest, meaning look. He filled and lighted his pipe, each movement being made with peculiar emphasis, as though it beat time to momentous thought. He dipped the pipe into the embers; pressed it against the under side of the mantel-tree; then placed the stem between his lips, where it was held firmly within a socket worn into the teeth; and having given a few whiffs to ignite the tobacco, he turned to his guests, and after a thoughtful pause, during which the smoke curled up about his head in graceful wreaths, he said:

“Karmel, I’ve been thinkin’ of somethin’.”

“So I supposed from your manner,” returned the scout.

“It’s somethin’ of importance, too,” answered Adam. “I’ve been lookin’ at them British uniforms you’ve got on, and I guess you can turn them to account.”

“Ah?” uttered Karmel, earnestly. “They have already served us one good turn, and if they can serve us another I

shall not be very sorry we took them. But what have you on hand now?"

"I will tell ye: There's a squad of them infarnal Tories about here somewhere; and I think they've been got together by some British officer. I'm jest as sure of it as I am that I'm alive; though I can't tell where nor when they meet, nor can I swear—that is, I couldn't swear on the book—to any one as belongin' to 'em. But I know of a few that I'm sure have jined 'em. I'm so sure that if 'twas sheep-stealin' instead of Toryin' I'd prosecute 'em. There's Jim Bright: he's one of 'em, I'm sartin."

"Jim Bright?" repeated Karmel thoughtfully. "I don't know him."

"Then so much the better. He won't know you. If you go to his house this evening in them uniforms, and pretend as though you'd been sent to him by some of the Britishers, he'll be sure to expose himself. He'll think you are Britishers, sure, and ye can get it all out of him. Of course you'll pretend as though you'd been sent to him as one of the king's friends."

"I understand you," said the scout. "By the rood, it is a capital plan. But you feel sure that this man is a Tory?"

"Sartin I do. I can swear that he's a Tory at heart; and I can almost swear that he is one of the gang that's bein' raised about here. We can't find out the particulars; but we've watched 'em, and we know there's mischief goin' on. Some of 'em are about Newark; some to the west'rd of us; and some in 'Lizabethto'n."

"But how shall we find this Jim Bright?" asked the scout.

"Oh, I'll go with ye and show ye the way, and then wait somewhere close by till ye come back. Of course ye can't go till night, because he'd be suspicious to see two British soldiers venterin' around here alone by daylight."

The matter was discussed at length, and the two patriots very soon made up their minds that they'd take the thing in hand. Adam explained to them that many of the people suspected the existence of a band of Tories in their midst; but so secretly were their meetings held, and their affairs

conducted, that they could gain no positive knowledge of them. Men had been seen traveling off on horseback late at night, and returning towards morning ; and upon following them they were found to go off towards Camptown, of course keeping clear of the American forces there. And upon comparing notes with the people of Newark it was found that the same thing had been observed there.

Our two friends put off their uniforms for the day ; and when they found that their host had some wood to chop and haul from an adjacent lot, they offered to help him. He would have refused the proffered assistance, but they extended it so cheerfully, and he wanted it so much, that he finally accepted it.

So the day was mostly spent at work ; and when evening came they ate their supper, and then laid their plans for the work in hand. At nine o'clock the two visitors having resumed their British uniforms, they saddled their horses, and bidding the good hostess not to sit up for them, they started off.

At the distance of two miles they came to a road which turned off to the left ; and having followed this two miles further towards Union, they took a by-way which brought them to a little hamlet of four dwellings.

"There," said Adam, "I shall stop here. You will follow right on just about a mile, and you'll see a small house without any other dwelling in sight. You can't miss it. The house is on one side of the road, and the barn on the other. You stop there and inquire for James Bright. You'll find him unless the Tories happen to have a meetin' to-night, which I don't think very probable. Anyhow, you know what to do now as well as I do."

The two patriots thanked their friend for his kindness, and then rode on. At the place designated they found the house, and having by dint of much perseverance, found the gate, they rode into the yard. They saw no lights anywhere, but they gave a loud rap on the door, and ere long the outlines of a human head were seen at an upper window.

"Who's there?" demanded the voice which belonged to the head.

"Does James Bright live here?" Karmel asked.

"That's my name," answered the head.

"We wish to see you a few moments."

"But who is '*we*'?" rather dubiously inquired the head.

"We are friends to all who do their duty," replied the scout; "though it is not always safe for even friends to expose themselves needlessly. If you will come down you shall not be disappointed."

With this the head disappeared, and the window was closed; and in the course of some five minutes, just as the applicants were beginning to fear that the fellow would not come, the door was opened, and the head, with the body attached, made its appearance.

"Now, who are ye?" the man asked, holding his candle up and shading it with his left hand. "Oh-o-ho!" he uttered, as he recognized the uniforms.

"You're—"

"—sh!" remonstrated the scout. "Not too loud."

"Don't be afraid. I haint got no sneakin' Rebels about my premises!"

This was spoken with a gusto and natural emphasis which gave sufficient proof of its sincerity, and our two adventurers knew from that moment with whom they had to deal.

"Good!" cried Karmel, as he leaped from his horse. "I am glad of that. And now where can we put our horses? We cannot stop long, as we must get back to New Brunswick in the morning. Or, at any rate, we must be free of these rebel precincts before daylight."

"Just hold on one minute, and I'll have a lantern, and we'll put 'em in the barn."

The host obtained his lantern in a very few moments, and then led the way across the road to the barn, where plenty of room was found for the horses. They were put up, with a foddering of hay, and the party returned to the house. The host had been in bed but a short time when his visitors arrived, so the kitchen was very comfortable. Fresh wood was put on, and then the man sat down and faced his guests.

"Of course we speak with James Bright!" replied

Karmel, who saw that the host was waiting for something to be said.

"You do, sir," replied the man thus addressed. "And you speak with one who honors and respects, and who will faithfully serve, his King."

This faithful servitor of King George was a heavy, coarse man, some forty years of age; quite homely in feature; though with nothing in his looks which could indicate an evil disposition.

"We knew you were a true Royalist," remarked Karmel, "or we should not have been here. We have been sent on by Sir William to—"

"Sir William?"

"Sir William Howe—our commander-in-chief. You know his name?"

"Oh, yes—but I was thinking of something else. Yes, yes—of course I know him."

"Well—he has sent us here to see how you get on. There may be need of the company that is forming here sooner than was anticipated."

"How much sooner?" asked Bright, who showed very plainly by his looks that he had no suspicion.

"We cannot tell you yet. But there may be some new movement made, and if there is you will be wanted. The General ordered us to come on; and as your name had been given to him as one of the most trustworthy of the company we were directed to call on you."

"Ha—and have I been favorable mentioned to the General?" cried the man with anxious pride.

"Certainly you have," responded Robert.

"Good! I may get an officer's commission, eh?"

"If you go to Brunswick I have no doubt of it."

"Oh, I shall go. I shall go as soon as we are wanted."

"How many have you now enlisted that can be depended upon?" asked Karmel, in a business-like tone.

"Just fifty. We have none that can not be depended upon. They are all true men; though I s'pose they mayn't all be alike capable."

"Of course not," responded Robert. "Sir William made that very remark. I think he would like to see you."

"Do you, though, in earnest?"

"I know he would."

"Well—he may see me one of these days."

"Of course he will; and perhaps sooner than you anticipate."

"Are you officers?"

"I am a captain," said Robert—"Captain *Berton*. Though of course I have more name that belongs on ahead of that."

"Oh—of course ye've got a first name. But as I didn't see any epaulets I didn't know as you were officers."

"It would have been dangerous to venture away so far in our official uniforms. Should we be seen suspicion would be excited at once, while two private soldiers might be looked upon differently. However, we travel by night, so there isn't much danger."

"Yes, yes—I understand," said Jim Bright, who really thought he did understand it all.

"And now," resumed the scout, "let us come to an understanding. Do you think all your men could be ready to join the main army at New Brunswick within four weeks?"

"Yes—I think they could. I am sure of it. But do you think we'll be wanted as soon as that?"

"Yes—I do," returned Karmel, in a tone which meant more to Robert than the host had any idea of. "I think you'll be called for as soon as you can be ready."

"Well—I guess we could be ready as soon as need be."

"How long before you are to meet again?" Karmel asked, in a tone slightly different from the one used before.

"We meet a week from next Tuesday night, at twelve o'clock."

"At midnight, eh?"

"Yes. That's our best hour, for then all hands can travel by dark."

"That's the time Sir William said he thought they met," remarked Robert, to his companion.

"Yes, yes—I remember," responded the scout. "But he didn't know where they met."

"No—he left that for us to find out here," added Karmel. And then turning to his host he continued,—

"We must be present at your next meeting, as we shall then have express orders for the guidance of the members."

"Shall ye? Good! We meet about four miles northwest of Elizabethtown, on the creek. It's only three miles from Newark. But you'd never find it without help."

"You say it's upon the Elizabethtown creek?"

"Yes—by the Middle Village bridge. If you come then, you can stop here and go with me."

Karmel considered upon this a few moments ere he replied. He finally concluded, however, that that would be as well as any way, and so he meant to let it go.

"That will suit us exactly," he said. "We can come directly here, and then go with you."

"That'll be your best way, sir."

"And in the mean time I think you had better keep our coming at this present time a secret," suggested the scout.

"Ah—why so? Don't ye want 'em to know that you may need 'em soon?"

"There is no particular necessity of it; and then if they were to know it, it might create jealousy. We wish to keep them all in good nature; but if they knew General Howe had sent directly to you, they would see at once that he meant to show you some particular favor. Don't you see?"

"Oh—ah—yes—I do," returned the delighted man.

"Then I guess you'd better keep it to yourself. Or, if you do say anything, you'd better not intimate that any one has called upon you."

"I won't—I won't. I see how 'twould work. They'd be jealous right off."

"Of course they would."

"Then you'll be here one week from next Tuesday evening. You'd better come as early as you can, so as to make sure of being there in time."

"We'll be on hand. And now I think we'll be moving. We have some distance to travel."

On their way to the barn Karmel once more spoke about keeping his visit a secret.

"For," said he, "if they mistrust that you are to be

placed in a position of command over them, it may produce disaffection."

Jim Bright saw it all. He would be careful. He knew what folks would do when they were jealous.

"You might just say to Sir William, by way of explanation, that I am a man to be depended upon," hinted James, as his visitors reached their saddles.

They promised to do all they could for him, and then rode off.

Upon that occasion both parties were very much pleased with the result of the conference.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONFERENCES AND PREPARATIONS.

WHEN the two Rebels reached the little hamlet where they had left their friend, they called at the house they had seen him enter, and he soon rejoined them; and when they were on their way Karmel explained the result of their mission. Adam Warner was delighted.

"I know'd he was one of 'em," he cried, enthusiastically "Gerusha! won't we make 'em look two ways for redemption?"

"I think we shall put a stop to their plotting," replied the scout.

"And how d'ye mean to work it? I shouldn't wonder if you could raise men enough around 'Lizabeth to'n to take 'em."

"Oh, we'll let Captain Pemberton attend to that."

"Ah—how?"

"I have thought I should go to headquarters and get a company of men from there," said Robert. "That will be the surest way and the best; and then we shall be clothed with authority."

"Jest so," responded Adam. "But still anybody has authority to stop the plottin' of traitors."

"So they have," remarked the youth; "but then you

know it is difficult, sometimes, for those not duly authorized, to hold prisoners."

"Ah—yes—jest so. You're right, Capt'n."

And so they talked on until they reached home, which they did just as the clock was striking two. They found the good wife up, with a cheerful fire burning, for which they were not sorry. Adam was pledged to entire secrecy upon the subject of the night's work, as everything might be ruined if it became known.

On the following morning the two Rebels held quite a conference ; and it was finally arranged that Robert should proceed at once to the headquarters of the American army, while Karmel went in another direction on business of his own. They packed up their borrowed uniforms and gave them in charge to their host, bidding him to have them ready when they wanted them.

Breakfast was eaten, and then the horses were brought forth, and the adventurers mounted.

"Now mind," said Adam, with an earnest expression ; "when you want a home, this is the place. It is as much yours as it is mine as far as shelter and food are concerned. Ye won't forget."

They both promised ; and they did it feelingly, for they knew he spoke from a warm, true heart.

To Elizabethtown the Rebels rode on together. Their plans had been all arranged on the way, so they had only to take leave of each other after their arrival at the village.

"Well," said Robert, "we must part for a short time ; but we shall find pleasure in the thought that we are soon to meet again."

"Yes," returned the old scout, in a low, hoarse whisper, made so by his effort to keep down a powerful emotion. He grasped the hand of his youthful friend, and clung to it for a long while. "We shall meet again—I'm sure we shall. But if we should not—"

"What is it?" asked Robert, after waiting for some moments for his companion to continue.

"Nothing. We shall meet again, soon."

"But you were about to say something of importance—of importance to you. What is it?"

"I was upon the point of saying a few words ; but let it pass. We shall not be long separated. I will say this, however : Let nothing prevent you from rejoining me here. I have more interest in your affairs than you than you dream of. You will not fail to come."

The youth was deeply affected. The old scout was much agitated, and his eyes were moist ; and as he gazed into Robert's face, still holding his hand as in the first grasp, there was an expression upon his features that the other could not fathom.

"I shall surely meet you if we both live, but still you know how uncertain all things of earth are."

"I know it—I know it."

"Then if you have anything to tell—anything which I should know—why not tell me now?"

Karmel started suddenly, and let drop the hand that he had held.

"I expressed more than there is in fact, I fear," he said with an abortive attempt to smile. "I only wished to be sure that I should see you again. That's all. Good-by. Be careful. God bless you !"

"The same to you," warmly returned the youth. "God keep you well. Good-by."

In a few moments they were out of sight of each other, and then Robert pondered as he rode along. There was something very strange in the manner the scout had exhibited, and the young man would have given much to have had the mystery cleared up. But he could do nothing toward it, so after awhile he let the matter pass. He knew that he had never seen Karmel to know him, before the meeting on the road a few days ago, so there could not possibly be anything in the old man's meaning which he could fathom unaided.

As our hero settled this point in his mind for the present, he urged his horse with a brisk trot, and sped on his way. He was now on the high road from Elizabethtown to Morristown, and as the whole distance was within the limits of the patriot outposts, he had no danger to fear from the enemy. He reached the American camp before

night, and that evening he had the pleasure of taking tea with General Washington.

The American commander-in-chief was really pleased to see the man who had sent him the British transport ; and evinced his gratitude by a warmth of greeting and a cordiality of manner which he seldom bestowed upon visitors during times of such mental anxiety as worked upon him now.

"And further," said Robert, after the subject of the prize-brig had been thoroughly discussed, "I must tell you of another plan which I have on foot. I have my eye upon a company of Tories—some fifty in number—and I wish to get a few men from your army to help me to capture them."

"Ah—Tories !" uttered the general, his eyes sparkling, and his hands moving nervously. "Aye—you shall have as many men as you want. We can look the British invaders in the face as honorable foes ; but these Tories are like so many traitors—springing up on all hands—lurking about every corner—and poisoning the very atmosphere ! Fifty of them, you say ?"

"Yes, sir. I know when they are to meet, and shall be conducted to their rendezvous at the time ; and if I can have from thirty to forty of your good men, I can have them all under your charge within two weeks."

Washington was well pleased with this ; for he knew that he had much to fear from these Tories. Many of them were men who had been admitted to the councils of the Patriots ; and nearly all of them knew more or less of the position of affairs in the American army ; so they were doubly dangerous. And, furthermore, it was a melancholy fact that these same Americans who joined the British forces were more cruel and relentless toward the Patriots than the British themselves. Hence the capturing of a band of Tories was hailed with peculiar satisfaction by the Patriots everywhere.

The commander-in-chief had other business on his hands, so Robert made all his arrangements as soon as possible, and then took his leave.

It had been arranged that a detachment of soldiers

should be sent to a certain point in Newark on the evening of the Tories' meeting, and there await Robert's order. They were to be sent after dark, and by different ways, so that suspicion should not be aroused. There were several companies stationed within nine miles of Newark, so that a party from thence would reach the point designated without trouble.

Robert took his way back to Elizabethtown in the morning, where he spent several days with his friends. His chief object, however, as the reader will guess, in remaining there, was to meet with Andrew Van Ruter, by whom he expected a message from Rosalie. But the week passed away, and no answer came. The youth began to feel uneasy."

On Sunday morning Karmel returned. He seemed sad and melancholy at first; but ere long he overcame it, and before night he had regained his wonted cheerfulness. The day was spent in church, and in the evening Robert related the circumstances attending his visit to General Washington. In return Karmel stated that he had been on business of no importance to any one save himself, and Robert asked him no questions.

Monday came, and passed. Tuesday morning came—the Tuesday upon the night of which they were to meet the Tories. Robert sat alone in one of the rooms of the inn, when a messenger looked in and informed him that a gentleman wished to speak with him. The youth directed that the visitor should be shown in. In a few minutes the door was again opened, and Andrew Van Ruter entered.

Robert started to his feet very quickly as he saw who it was; and having embraced him he conducted him to a seat.

"Of course you bring me news from Rosalie?" he said, seeing that Andrew did not speak upon the subject. "What is it?" he eagerly added, noticing the quick shade of pain which came upon his visitor's face. "You have not brought me tidings of ill?"

"I'll tell you all—and in a very few words, too," replied Van Ruter. "Rose would have come with me if she could have got away. We had made arrangements to that effect.

I was at her house yesterday, and her father had just assured her that she should marry with your cousin Elroy on Thursday. For that reason she wished to escape with me. She assumed the disguise of a British soldier, and made her way through the deep snow of the fields to my house ; but just as she reached the gate a soldier arrested her. She was allowed to see Kate, and she sent word to her that she would have come had it been possible. She is to go to your Uncle Richard's to-day, and be married to Elroy on Thursday."

"But her mother?" gasped Robert.

"Ah—didn't you know? Alas! she is dead!"

The stricken youth started to his feet and paced the floor for some moments with nervous, uneven strides.

"Married—on Thursday!" he cried, stopping and gazing into Andrew's face.

"Yes. If she lives, and Elroy lives, it will be sure to happen, unless something can be done."

"Something must be done!" exclaimed Robert, vehemently. "Something shall be done. Marry with Elroy Pemberton? with one who has been to her a continual source of agony and fear? I will go to New Brunswick at once?"

"And what will you do if you go?" asked Andrew.

"No—not to-day," resumed Robert, not noticing the question of his companion. "I cannot go until to-morrow. But I will go then!"

"What will you do there, Robert?"

"What will I do? I will—I will—a—I'll find something to do. Oh, I know God will help me against such wrong!"

"Well—I should probably go if I were in your place," said the visitor, after a few moments thought. "You surely would do all I would. My very life would be nobly spent in her defense. But there are two things we may depend upon, if nothing is done to prevent: Rosalie will be taken to the house of your uncle to-day, and be married to Elroy on Thursday."

"You think she cannot escape?"

"It is impossible. Her father has placed two soldiers to

watch her. There is a surveillance upon her movements both night and day. By the powers of heaven, Robert, there is a spice of ugliness in that man's character which I cannot understand."

Pemberton gazed into his friend's face a few moments without replying. He was thinking of the character of the man last spoken of. At length he said :

"I did once think that only a false pride moved Sir Arthur Lincoln ; but I think so no more. He is, as you say, actuated by a spirit of ugliness. And revenge, too, has much to do with this movement. He is angry because his daughter loves me, and he will punish her for it. He will kill two birds with one stone—he will have his revenge upon both her and me, and at the same time marry her to the man he has long looked upon as the husband of his choice. But I can do something. I can raise a disguise that they cannot penetrate."

"If you do go," remarked Andrew, "you must be very careful to disguise yourself, for there are sharp eyes about that house, and your detection will be your death-warrant. By the way—you may not have heard of the orders of General Howe concerning Karmel and yourself?"

"No. What are they?"

"An order has been issued and read to all the camp, instructing each and every commissioned officer to have you hung immediately upon your arrest ; or, as soon afterward as possible."

"Aha—so they're anxious to be rid of us, eh? Very well—I'll look out for them."

The conversation continued until Karmel came in, and then Van Ruter took his leave, promising to call again after dinner.

After this Robert related to the scout all that he had heard, detailing it just as he had received it ; and when he had told it he asked his companion's advice. The latter paced up and down the room several times, and his look and manner plainly showed that he was deeply moved. At length he stopped before the youth, and in a low, feeling tone, he said :

"Rosalie Lincoln risked much to save us. The plan of

going to Brunswick is almost hopeless ; but yet we will go. We will disguise ourselves in some way, and reach the place after dark. I will go with you, Robert ; but yet I see little room for hope."

" Bless you ! " the young man ejaculated, starting up and seizing Karmel's hand. " I shall feel more hope now. We may succeed. Oh, God grant that we may free her from the impending curse ! "

The scout said " Amen," and then opened upon the subject of the work before them.

At noon Van Ruter called again ; but as he was not to return that day they only conversed upon topics already familiar.

When the shades of night had fallen upon the earth, the two Rebels called for their horses and repaired to the place where they were to meet the American soldiers. The distance was not great—about four miles—and when they reached it they found some of the men already arrived. At the end of half an hour more they were all on hand—forty of them,—and they were men, too, who looked of the right stamp.

It was arranged that two of them should accompany Karmel and Robert, while the others moved on to a point nearer to the scene of the intended action, where they were to wait until called for. There was a true Patriot, a farmer, named Van Ness, living only a mile from the place on the creek where the Tories were to meet, and to his house the soldiers were directed to repair.

Beyond this the plan was as follows : The two men who accompanied Robert and the scout were to wait near at hand, in concealment, while they went into Bright's house ; and then, when they came out, and rode off with their host, these two were to follow them carefully, and having seen where they stopped, they were to ride at once to their companions and lead them to the spot.

" You can't miss it," said Karmel, after these directions had been given. " The two who go with us will see where we stop, and they will know that that is the place of rendezvous for the Tories. The rest is very simple. We know the traitors will be armed ; but we shall come upon them

unexpectedly, and thus gain half the battle without striking a blow. Of course you will not go in a body, but drop along in pairs. If you all get there by midnight, it will be early enough."

When matters were satisfactorily arranged here, Karmel and Robert rode off, in company with the two men they had selected to accompany them, and proceeded to Adam Warner's, whom they found waiting for them. Adam had his arms prepared, for he was determined to accompany the adventurers. And upon reflection the two leaders saw that his assistance might be valuable. He was acquainted with the peculiar localities of the place where the Tories were to meet, and thus he might lead the soldiers to it more readily than could strangers; for even though the latter might see where the advance party disappeared, yet, in the dark, they might not be able to find the place of meeting without giving the alarm.

It was now near nine o'clock, and the party set out as soon as they could get ready. Karmel and Robert once more assumed their British uniforms; and Adam took along his wife's clothes-line, and such other pieces of cord fit for the binding arms and legs of Tories as he could find.

At the distance of a few rods from Bright's house Adam and the two soldiers stopped. The night was quite dark, the moon having set about half an hour before, so there was no danger of the trio's being seen if they used ordinary precaution.

The other two found Jim Bright waiting anxiously for them. His horse had been under saddle for an hour, he said; but Karmel told him 'twas a long ride from Brunswick, and Jim of course supposed they had ridden it, though they didn't say so. However, they were soon on the road, trotting briskly over the hard, crisp snow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MYSTIC COUNCIL.

THE road which our adventurers traveled was in some parts very good, and in others far from it. The *road*, we said. We should have said the *roads*, for there seemed to be no end to the turnings and twistings which they took. From road to road—from corner to corner—from highway to by-way—and from beaten paths to trackless banks of snow. Yet they moved along, making up for lost time in the deep snow, when they came to good going.

Twice during the ride the guide turned his head as though he heard something behind him. The last time he did so Karmel asked him if he heard anything.

"Don't know," he answered. "I thought I heard something; but it may have only been fancy. I can't see anybody, can you?"

"No," said the scout. "I can see nothing, nor have I heard anything."

"I guess 'twas only fancy."

And thus assured, they rode on again as before.

Elizabethtown was left some three miles to the right, and about eleven o'clock they struck the creek, upon the frozen surface of which they rode the rest of the way, it being only a distance of half-a-mile.

At this point they came to a small farm-house, to which was attached a wood-shed and a barn. This barn was quite a large one, but there were no lights to be seen anywhere about the premises.

"This is the place," said Mr. Jim Bright, emphatically, and half jocosely. "But," he added, with a movement of the head which Karmel knew must have been accompanied by a wink, "the *place* of places you shall see anon."

The yard was entered by a regular carriage or cart-path, and then the guide led the way to the barn. They entered at the front door, and found a man there engaged in braiding corn-husks for mats. He was an ordinary-looking farmer, habited in a thick smock-frock, and worked by the

light of a common perforated tin lantern, which was hung up before him.

"*Cold night this morning,*" said Jim, more distinctly than would have been the case in ordinary conversation.

"*Cold morning after night,*" returned the man in the smock-frock.

"*Cold enough for a king,*" rejoined Jim.

"*Then you'd better find a place warmer,*" methodically suggested smock-frock.

"*Which only the faithful can find,*" was the parrot-like response of Mr. Bright.

"*All right!*" cried the husk-braider, getting up from his work and leading the way to the back part of the barn. He seemed to regard the two visitors in uniform with a sort of deference; and he no doubt supposed them to be men of consequence.

While this quaint system of challenging had been going on the two interloping Rebels had been examining the premises; but they could see no signs of the presence of any one besides themselves. Along at the back of the barn was a low mow of hay which reached about two-thirds the whole length; while the rest of the space was occupied by stalls, in which were two horses. Then to the left, as they faced the back of the barn, was another mow of hay which occupied very near two-thirds of the whole floor. It was very high, reaching clear to the beams, and was packed away as such mows generally are. Between the two there was a passage leading to the further end of the barn, where there was another stall for cows, and four cows tied therein.

Into this passage Bright led the horse, directing the others to follow him. When they came to where the cows were he pushed open a door in the end of a long, low mow! It was ingeniously constructed, and when closed the whole appeared to be the end of an honest pile of hay. When our friends entered they found the place to be occupied by a double row of narrow stalls, over fifty in number, and nearly all of them occupied! The animals stood upon a bed of saw-dust, so that all the noise they could make with their feet might be supposed by a stranger to come from the two horses and the cows, which were in sight.

It was very natural for the two Rebels to suppose that the owners of these horses could not be far off ; and upon this point they were presently enlightened. As soon as their horses were secured Jim Bright led them back to the aforementioned passage ; and about half-way through it he stopped and turned towards the main mow. The whole surface before him seemed to be a neatly trimmed side of the hay-mow, but upon pushing against a spot where a lock of grass longer than the rest hung out, a common-sized single door was opened ! Jim passed in, and Karmel and Robert followed.

For a few moments the two Rebels were lost in wonder. They had heard of such things, but had never before seen anything like it. The whole mow was hollow, thus affording room for two hundred men to be comfortably seated.

Surely these Tories had a very safe place for their meetings, for a man might search all day in that barn for a place of concealment and not find it.

There were fifty men, at least, assembled there, and the light came from four glass lanterns suspended from cross-pieces overhead. The strange apartment was not very high, the hay on the top being quite deep. The Rebels both wore overcoats, and as they entered here they closed them in front so that their uniforms might not be seen. And very fortunately for them, also, their conductor took a seat back of the rest, so that the two strangers were not noticed.

It appeared that the man out in the barn-floor, who kept watch there, had full charge of the place, and all who could pass him, and find entrance readily to the secret chamber, were supposed to be "all right." So the newcomers were not examined any further.

Upon one side of the apartment was a rude desk fashioned of rough pine boards, and behind it sat a man who seemed well advanced in years. His hair was long and gray, and his unshorn beard the same. He, of course, was the leader, and from some remark they heard him drop they judged that he had been there but a few minutes. The rest of the members all sat on seats before him, said

seats being pine planks resting upon blocks of wood. They were not all armed as Karmel had expected to find them ; but there was a stack of muskets in one corner—nearly a hundred in number—and several boxes which no doubt contained cartridges. Near them was a pile of cartouch boxes and belts. They were prepared for work, sure enough.

As Bright and his followers entered all hands turned to take a look, but they discovered nothing out of the way. In the first place, the light was not very good ; and in the next, there was probably no one man there who knew all the others ; so those who did not recognize the strangers supposed that others did—and thus 'twas all right. When our friends comprehended this they were very glad that they did not show their uniforms here as they had done to the man who was braiding husks.

As soon as all was still, the gray-haired man behind the desk arose to speak, and in a moment all ears were opened.

"My brothers," he said, in a strange, cracked tone, "we have met once more, and thus far God has prospered us. He is gradually giving us power over the enemies of our King ; and the time is not far distant when all opposition to the true principles of government shall be overcome. You shall have opportunity to distinguish yourselves. Your presence at the camp will be needed ere long, and you must be prepared to go. You see the muskets and ammunition have been sent, and it is expected that we shall have opportunity to drill some before you join the army. And now we will hear from those who were appointed at the last meeting to watch the movements of suspected Rebels. Have any of you seen or heard anything of interest ? And there is one more thing : two prisoners—Rebels—have escaped from the prison at New Brunswick, and have not yet been found. One of them was called Karmel, and the other was a young man named Robert Pemberton."

"I know 'em both," said a young, clownish-looking fellow, who sat near the desk ; and one whom the Rebels at once recognized as having been seen by them.

"Ah—have you seen them within two weeks ?" asked the leader.

"No—but I'll keep my eyes open."

"That's right. And I wish the rest of you to do the same."

"By my faith," whispered Robert, putting his lips close Karmel's ear, "that fellow is a younger man than he looks to be. That hair is not his own!"

"Just so it struck me," replied the scout, in the same low tone. "He's a young man in disguise."

At this juncture a weazen-faced looking mortal, who loved his King, but loved his "old Jamaica" better, arose and announced that he had reason to believe that Adam Werner was an active Rebel. He said he watched the "feller," and had "seed 'um a-pok'n 'raound as no 'onest man would do."

This called up another loyal subject who had "reason to believe that old Sal Boonton kept Rebels hid in her cellar!" It was subsequently explained that this Sal Boonton was a poor widow woman, who had two sons at Morristown with the Rebel Washington.

So it was ordered that a strict watch should be kept upon Adam Warner and old Sal Boonton; and the man in the desk intimated that they might take the property of these "spotted Rebels" for their own use.

"Karmel," whispered our hero, "one of us must go out. Our men can never find this place in the world. They must have arrived by this time. We mustn't ask, for that fellow in the white wig may be from the British camp; and if he is he may recognize us if he gets a fair look at our faces."

"You are right?" returned the scout. "One of us must go. Ha! I have it. Do you faint away, and I'll carry you out; and if Bright helps us we can send him back or dispose of him."

This was considered to be a good plan, and in a few moments Robert uttered a low groan, and fell over into his companion's lap.

"Ha!" whispered Karmel to Jim Bright, "the captain has fainted. He has a fit. I must carry him out. Can I go?"

"Sartin. I'll explain it to 'em."

"But look ye, sir," said the scout, "you'd better not say anything more than that we are friends of yours; for I fear that fellow in the desk has some favorites here upon whom he hoped to bestow the offices. I wish to watch him. You understand?"

"Oh, yes. There—take him right up."

As Karmel lifted his companion up he found that he must have help, so he got Jim to take hold. There was quite a stir among the assembled heroes as the young man was raised up, and the ruler asked what was the matter.

"It's a friend of mine has fainted away," answered Jim, as he raised Robert's legs under his arm. "We'll take him out into the fresh air and have him up in a little while. He's only fainted."

"Won't make a very good soldier," remarked one of the Tories.

"He never faints in the open air," returned Jim, at a venture.

Jim Bright was known to be one of the most firm and uncompromising royalists they had, so no one thought to question him any further; and as the president had just arisen to make some important remark, they soon turned their attention to the desk.

Karmel and Jim soon carried Robert to the barn-floor, where the sentinel was, and there laid him down.

"There," said the scout, as he put a bundle of husks under the young man's head; "I can get along now. I am used to these fits."

"Well—if ye can get along, I'll go back; for I want to hear all that's said."

So Master James Bright went back, and then the scout turned to the sentinel and asked him if he would not help carry the poor fellow out-doors.

"Sartin I will," responded smock-frock; and as he spoke he took hold of the youth's legs.

Karmel stooped over and raised the head, and drawing the ear close to his lips he quickly whispered:

"When I say '*all right*,' jump up and help me gag this fellow!"

The sentry pushed open the door and backed out, and

'twas well that he did *back* out, for had he gone the other way he would have seen two score, or more, of dark forms within the yard, and not over three or four rods distant. Karmel saw them, and he managed to keep the Tory's back turned towards them until they laid their burden down.

"There," said the latter, as they came to a log of wood that lay upon the snow, "we can set him up agin this ere, can't we?"

"Yes—just the place. Easy now. There—*all right!*"

In an instant Robert was upon his feet; and on the next the man in the smock-frock was off from his. In all probability he was much astonished; but ere he could give expression to any such emotion a kerchief was bound over his mouth, and his arms and legs tied. He struggled hard, but when the scout presented a pistol to his head, and assured him he should shoot him if he made the least noise, he manifested a willingness to remain quiet.

As soon as the guard was thus disposed of, the two Rebels hastened to the gate, where they found Adam Warner and the forty soldiers.

"D'ye know where they are?" asked Adam Warner, as he recognized our hero.

"Yes. We have them safe enough."

"Good! And it's lucky you come, too; for we didn't know how in the world to hit 'em without givin' 'em a warnin' of our presence. I 'spect they're in a snug place, ain't they?"

"They are," replied Robert. "But come—we may have no time to lose. Where is Karmel? Ah—here. Come, Karmel,—we must be on the move. Suppose we leave the horses here in the road—make them fast to the fence—and noiselessly enter the barn, and take them as they come out."

This plan was at once agreed to; and the men were directed to dismount and secure their horses to the fence. When this was done they moved towards the barn; but before they entered, the old scout gave them particular caution to make no noise.

In a few minutes the Patriots were all in, and having looked once more to the sentinel to see that he was secure,

and thrown a thick blanket over him to keep the frost from him, Karmel followed and closed the door behind him.

In low whispers, and to knots of half-a-dozen at a time, the leaders explained to their men the position and character of the place where the Tories were in council; and at the same time gave the necessary directions for action. They were to do nothing until the meeting had been adjourned, and the members began to come out; and then they were to seize and conquer them with as little violence as possible.

At just about this time the man in the gray wig was engaged in assuring his hearers that a path of glory was open before them! This was within the mysterious mow of hay. They little dreamed, as they thought of the promised glory, what awaited them outside of their mystic retreat.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PRISONERS—ONE OF THEM LOSES HIS WIG AND BEARD.

THE patriots had but little spare time on their hands, for within ten minutes after the instructions had been given, a movement was heard within the council chamber; and it was evident that the meeting had been adjourned, and that the Tories would soon begin to show themselves.

The cords which Adam Warner had brought along had been cut up into convenient lengths for the use they were to be put to, and distributed among the men; so they were all prepared to secure their prisoners as soon as captured.

“—s-s-s-t!” came in a quick low hiss from Karmel’s lips. “They are coming! Stand by!”

In a moment more a man made his appearance, and was quickly knocked down and dragged back. Four of the Tories were thus disposed of before the alarm was given.

“*We are betrayed!*” shouted a man who had come to the door and seen his companion knocked down.

"Here!" ordered Robert, speaking quickly, but calmly. "Some of you pass through here to where the cows are. There may be a door somewhere there!"

A dozen of the men rushed through, and as they did so Karmel gave the order for attacking the Tories in their retreat.

"Quick!" he cried—"before they can arm!"

As he spoke he pushed the secret door open and leaped in, with Robert at his heels; and as rapidly as possible the rest came rushing after.

The Tories were in a bad fix. The suddenness of the alarm had so utterly astounded them that but a few had yet even made a motion towards gaining the muskets which stood in the corner; and those who had instinctively grasped them found the weapons of no use, as they were not loaded, and could hence only be used as clubs.

Some few of them had pistols, but as fortune would have it they had been the first to rush forward, and were the first secured. They fired several times, but the only harm done was the wounding of two of their own men.

In such an engagement there could be no equality of chances. The Tories were set upon by a foe of whom they knew nothing; without useful arms; at first thrown into a state of excitement from which they could not collect themselves; and huddled together without aim or purpose. It was not until more than half of them had been thrown down and bound that they came fully to their senses. But 'twas too late now.

There was a brisk season, however; for most of the Tories were stout men, and just as fearless, probably, under ordinary circumstances, as their assailants. But there is something in being betrayed and attacked in such a place of refuge that is enervating in itself. The idea of such a hidden chamber is one of safety—it has been looked upon as invulnerable to all save the initiated—and when the inmates suddenly find their chiefest defense torn from them, a spirit of despair is most apt to follow. And so it was in this case.

At length the conflict ceased. The Tories had been

captured and not a man killed on either side, though several were pretty severely wounded.

"But where is our friend of the gray head?" asked Robert, as he looked around among the prisoners in vain for the man who has presided.

"I think I saw a man go under the desk," said one of the soldiers.

"Ha! that's his game, is it?"

"Yes," responded Karmel, "he's laid under the table."

A general laugh followed this sally, and while it was ringing through the place the two leaders hurried to the desk, where they found the presiding officer safely stowed away beneath it!

"Look out!—I'll shoot the first man that dares to approach me!" he cried.

Both Robert and Karmel saw that he had a pistol in each hand, and for the moment they drew back. It was a peculiar position to attack a man in, for not more than two could reach him at the same time, and even a child, with nerve enough to hold a pistol, might shoot those two ere they could touch him. The matter was soon settled, however, by Robert's seizing the desk by the upper edge and pulling it over. Karmel was ready, and the moment the desk tipped he sprang upon the retired official. The two rolled over upon the floor several times, and finally the man of the gray hair came out atop. He was the youngest and the most active. *The youngest?* Yes.

The gray hair had been pulled off in the scuffle, and the long gray beard came with it. Robert saw the wig fall, but he was not astonished when he saw the jet-black head come up, for he had already suspected the falsehood of the gray hair. But in a moment more he saw the face. He started as though a bolt from heaven had struck at his feet! He looked again—he was not mistaken. He saw the well-known features of his cousin—ELROY PEMBERTON!

Our hero had just seen this when Adam Warner sprang forward, seized the Tory leader by the collar, and lifted him bodily to his feet.

"Here, you chaps as has got ropes left—jest gin us a lift here. This feller's kind of uneasy."

Half a dozen men hastened forward at the call of the stout yeoman, and in a very short time the last prisoner was secured. Robert turned away, for he did not wish to see him there. There were too many wild emotions in his bosom. Presently Karmel sought his side.

"Who is it, Robert?" he asked. "You acted as though you knew him?"

"It is my cousin Elroy."

"Ha! It is?"

"Yes."

"Thank God for that! Rosalie is safe!"

The old man spoke this quickly and fervently, with his hands suddenly clasped, and his eyes turned heavenward. It came from his heart—and it was a deeply-felt thank-offering to the Giver of all good.

Robert said nothing at that time. He was too deeply moved to speak. He only caught the hand of his friend, and gave it a strong, convulsive grasp.

As soon as convenient the prisoners were led out into the open barn, and here a conference was held. To allow them to mount their horses would be dangerous, for some of them might escape; so it was finally concluded that the animals should be left until morning. There was a detachment of the American army at Camptown, which was only some three miles distant, and it was arranged that the Tories should be marched off to that place, where, no doubt, there would be found a safe prison in which to keep them until they could be conveyed to the main camp.

Aside from their leader there was not another of the Tories who felt quite so bad as did Master Jim Bright. He was first astounded; then mad; and finally he settled down into a prayerful mood. He caught Robert by the arm with his elbow—for his hands were so confined that he could use them—and having succeeded in arresting his attention, he said:

"Oh, you ought to let me go! 'Twas all through me that you got the rest. Why can't ye let me go? Oh, ye won't keep me a prisoner! Say—for mercy's sake!—oh! for heaven's sake—do let me go!"

"It would be impossible now," returned our hero. And

then, in a argumentative tone, he added: "You had better not think of such a thing any more. If we let you go your companions will be sure to think you betrayed them knowingly. They know now that you conducted us hither; and if they see you accept any favor at our hands, they'll surely hang you as soon as they get liberated."

This settled Jim. He had not looked at it in that light before; but he saw it now, and he said no more about being set free.

The prisoners—just fifty in number without their leader—were arranged in marching order, the sentinel in the smock-frock having been brought in and included in the number. They all had their arms pinioned behind them, and all had been allowed to put on their gloves or mittens; and such as had thrown off their overcoats were allowed to get them and wear them.

Just as these arrangements had been made, Elroy Pemberton spoke for the first time since his capture. He spoke to Robert, and asked him to come to him. Our hero did so, and then his cousin wished to step aside and speak a few words privately. This Robert granted. When they had reached the corner of the barn-floor, and out of hearing from the others, the prisoner said in a very weak, humble tone:

"Robert, you are not going to put me in prison, are you?"

"Why—what shall I do with you?" our hero returned.

"Let me go. Oh, you cannot give me over to the mercies of the Reb—a—the American soldiers!"

"I don't know how I can help you, Elroy. You are taken as a prisoner. You were found in arms against your country—plotting for the destruction of the American State!"

"Pshaw! You know that's all gammon. I was with a party of men who were met together to see—a—to see—if they would join in this struggle or not. You know that not one of them ever struck a blow against—"

"Stop, Elroy, you only talk nonsense now. We don't spare the panther's cub because its eyes are not opened; nor do we spare our enemies because their work is only

plotted and not done. You must consider yourself a prisoner."

"But—Robert—my cousin—you must let me go. I *must* be at home before another day passes."

"And yet I don't see how you can do it," said Robert, striving hard to keep from sight the emotions called up by the last remark of his cousin.

"But—it must be done somehow."

"Why so particular?" asked the young Rebel leader, calmly, and as though he really wished for the information.

"Why—a—there is—a very great need. My father is very sick! I may never see him again if you keep me from him now. The last words he spoke to me, as I came away this morning, were, 'My son, be sure and return quickly if you would see your father alive!' Oh, you can feel for me! Remember that father's kindness for you. Look to the past. If he did ask you to leave when you embraced opinions which clashed with his feelings, you can yet remember his many acts of kindness. You will not plant a thorn in his dying pillow by keeping his only child from him in such an hour! Robert—my cousin—let me go to my dying father."

One who knew not the truth would surely have been moved by this appeal unless the stammering in its commencement had given them a suspicion. But Robert knew too well the source of his hard-hearted cousin's impatience. He knew that the terrible curse which had been suspended by so brittle a thread over Rosalie's head—aye, and over his own as well—was now within his reach, and he had the power to cast it harmless down. No, no, Elroy Pemberton; were a thousand Tories in thy noble cousin's power, he would let them all escape ere he would suffer thee to return to lay waste the pure heart of Rosalie Lincoln.

"Methinks I should not have left a father who loved me so well, if he were so nigh to the hour of death!" said Robert, with an honesty of expression which conveyed no sign of the knowledge he held.

"But do you mean that you will not let me go?" the prisoner asked, betraying a little of the temper he had held back so well.

"I can not," returned the other promptly. "There is another here who has equal control with me. His consent would be necessary."

"And if I gain his consent will you consent?" cried Elroy, eagerly.

"Yes—I will."

"Then bring him."

Robert called Karmel to the spot, and when he had come the prisoner told the story of his "*sick, dying father*" over again. He did it most artfully, "piling up the agony" most intensely, and putting on "sorrow like a garment."

"Now, sir," he concluded, almost out of breath from his elocutionary effort, "can you keep me here?"

"No, sir. We are going to march you to Camptown!" answered the scout promptly.

"But you will not keep me a prisoner. You will not deliver me up into the hands of the officers of the American army?"

"Look ye, sir!" exclaimed Karmel, almost savagely—"A man who will hide under a desk while poor men under his command are in danger, will not hesitate to tell a big lie! If your father is as sick as you say he is, then you were a villain to come off here upon such an errand. But he isn't sick! I'd rather throw your falsehood back into your face than to bandy words with you! Take your place, sir!"

The feelings of Elroy Pemberton at that moment must have been very peculiar. He gazed into the face of the man who thus strangely addressed him for some moments; but he had nothing to say in reply; so he took his place among the prisoners, and ere long afterward the party were started off.

The road to Camptown was not very good, nor was it very bad. The prisoners were marched on in pairs, with part of the Patriot force ahead, and part behind them. They were but little over an hour in reaching their destination, and they found good accommodations for their Tory gang. The prison for the occasion was in an old house, which had been used for the same purpose before. There was a fire-place, and the large room where the new comers were confined was kept quite warm and comfortable.

Ten men had been left in the barn to look after the munitions and horses there ; and in the morning ten more were sent back to help to bring these things to the camp. Karmel remained with the prisoners, while Robert went once more to Morristown, where he found General Washington expecting to see him or to hear from him.

When our hero had related the events of his mission the General was not only much pleased, but expressed a great deal of gratitude for the service which had thus been rendered to the cause of Liberty in that section.

"But," said he, "do you think there is any need of keeping all these men prisoners? I do not feel called upon to release them upon considerations of sympathy alone, for though most of them may have families or friends who need their assistance, yet the very fact of their having enlisted to serve the British is proof that they were to have been spared from their homes. However, there may be some of them who would mind their own business in the future were they set free, and never be found in arms against us again. Such we had better let go ; for, to tell the plain truth, we have not provisions enough to keep our army as it should be kept, and of course prisoners are not very profitable just now so far as keeping them is concerned."

"I think there are several of these Tories who might be set at liberty with perfect safety, if we gave them to understand that we did this because of the confidence we have in their honor," returned Robert. "But," he added, "there is one who will seek the hardest to get free, but who must be the very last one discharged. I mean Elroy Pemberton."

"Is he any relation to Richard Pemberton, of New Brunswick?" asked Washington.

"He is an only child, sir!"

"Ah—then I think he will be full as safe under guard awhile."

"Yes," added Robert. "And there is another reason." And thereupon the young man related all the principal circumstances connected with the plot against Rosalie Lincoln.

Washington showed his sympathy very plainly, and at

once promised his young friend that Elroy should not be released ; at least while the British were anywhere in that part of the country. He also gave Robert full power, with the consent of Karmel, to release such of his prisoners as he might think proper, and promised that the rest should be taken care of.

Captain Pemberton spent the night with a friend of his in the camp, and one who was also a particular friend of Clara's, and in the morning he returned to Camptown.

The prisoners, fifty-one in number, were brought out, and several trusty Patriots were sent for—men who were acquainted with most of the Tories. When these had arrived, which was toward night, the examination commenced.

Master James Bright was the first one examined ; and upon the giving of a solemn oath that he would never assist the British again, he was set free, and his horse returned to him.

There were twenty-four others who were pronounced by the witnesses as men of honor and truth, and who joyfully took the oath required of them, and accepted the liberty offered.

The rest were ordered for Morristown. Some of them pleaded hard ; but both Robert and Karmel thought it best to refer them to the commander-in-chief. Elroy once more asked for liberty, but he was promptly silenced. He seemed to mistrust now that Robert had received some information of his intended nuptials, for he glared upon his Rebel cousin with a look of hatred which must have had some sudden cause.

On the next day, the six-and-twenty retained prisoners were forwarded to the American headquarters, and then Karmel and Robert returned to Elizabethtown, where they found Andrew Van Ruter ready to start for home. Word was sent by him to Rosalie of what had happened ; and Robert also wrote a letter for his sister, which Andrew promised to see delivered. That letter contained a secret which might cost a human life, should it fall into the hands of the enemy ; and the messenger promised that no other eye should rest upon it, until Clara had it, saving his sister Kate's. He might have to employ her in the work.

CHAPTER XX.

EUGENE.

IT was one week after the events last recorded, that Clara Pemberton sat alone in the small room which had been allotted for her use. It was near nightfall, and the cold wind howled mournfully without; and as the sad sound fell upon her ear, her mind instinctively ran back to the happy seasons of early childhood, when by her parents' side, she had loved to hear the song of the wintry wind. She remembered that old seat in the corner of the old fireplace, just wide enough for two, where she was wont to pass the long evenings of the snow-season, sharing that double seat with her loved brother. She remembered how Robert used to come to the accustomed place, with a pan of hickory-nuts; how she would hold the pan, while he, with an inverted flatiron upon his knees, cracked them one by one, and tossed them into her lap. Then came the little song, the story, and the jest, or, mayhap, some conversation of moral profit, while with pins, forks, scissors, or whatever else came handy, they picked out the bruised meats, and enjoyed the gladsome feast.

Oh, how vividly did all those pictures of the past come back to her now! The sun gradually sank from sight, and the curtain of night fell upon the wintry scene ere the unhappy maiden thought of time in the present. The first that called her to a sense of things about her, was a heavy footfall near her door. She started up, and just then the door opened.

"Hallo!—where's Clara?"

"I'm here, sir."

"What are ye in the dark for?"

"I had no need of a light, sir, and I did not think of it."

"Well—we'll have one, I guess. Where is your lamp?"

Clara went to the mantel-shelf, and got the article desired, and with a small blazing brand from the fire, she lighted it. The darkness gave way—and Colonel James Lyndarm stood revealed. Clara had known his voice well enough,

but she wished to see his face. She could judge by that what his feelings were. She gazed upon it, and she found an expression of determination there—an expression which seemed to say, “I will not be thwarted now!”

The colonel took a seat; and as soon as Clara had followed his example, he opened upon the subject of his visit.

“Miss Clara,” he said, “I have come this evening upon an important business; and I wish you first to understand that I am wholly in earnest—that I mean just what I am going to say. I have wasted time enough. I have no more to waste. When I had you brought here, it was my intention to make you my wife; and that intention I am now bent upon carrying out.”

“Colonel Lyndarm,” returned the maiden, sternly and firmly, for she was moved more by indignation than fear at first, “you seem to forget that you have one wife already?”

“It makes no odds to you how many wives I have. I am determined to *have you*! I do not pretend to excuse the deed—I only affirm that it is my will. My wife you shall be, as sure as we both live to another Sabbath morn!”

“But, sir, you can not find a clergyman who will dare to perform such a mockery; I will not submit!”

“You labor under an error, my dear girl. I need no clergyman. I have a justice engaged to perform the ceremony. All is prepared. So you need not be uneasy on that score.”

“Wretch!” cried Clara, starting up from her chair, and and clenching her hands: “do you think me a mere tool, which you can use at will?”

“Not at all, my dear,” replied Lyndarm, with a sardonic smile; “I take you for a very beautiful girl—for one whom I love, and whom I must possess. That’s all. And now it but remains for me to possess you, which I shall do as sure as fate! I am willing to save you from shame. People here need not know that I have a wife in England. You will be looked upon as the legal, honored wife of a British colonel; and if I leave you, and return to my native land, you can pass for a widow.”

“Fool!”

"Not so much of a fool but that you shall tremble before me, if your tongue takes not less license! I am what I am, and I mean what I mean. You are to be mine; and if you choose to accept the shield of the ceremony which I propose, well and good; but if you choose not to accept it, then be mine as I will! I have set next Sunday as the day; and as sure as there is a God above us, you shall be mine from that time!"

Clara gazed up into the man's face, but she made no reply. She was only thinking if she could not escape all this. She had not believed that Lyndarm would come to this. She had fancied that he only meant to win her, if he could, by persuasion, or by imprisonment—that he would keep her confined until, for the sake of liberty, she would consent to become his wife. But as she now reflected upon this new phase, she began to be frightened. How could she escape if he had firmly resolved that she should not?

"You understand me," the colonel resumed. "I have not entered into this plan blindly or in haste. While thousands of your sex are being ruined and degraded by the soldiery, I am resolved to give you the shield of honorable alliance, if you will accept it. But that rests with yourself, while the simple question of your being mine rests with me. However, you will have made up your mind by Sunday. To-day is Thursday. So you will have time enough. Remember now: not all the powers of earth can prevent the consummation of my plan! You may rest upon the assurance, and govern yourself accordingly. Good-evening."

As he thus spoke, he arose and left the room. Clara remained in her seat for some minutes, and then started up and gazed about her. Every nerve was strung, every muscle set. She had a fearful theme upon which to dwell. Another mask had been thrown from the villain's face. She now saw that he could not only deceive, but that he would use force to accomplish his foul purpose. Until now she had only felt that a firm, uncompromising denial was necessary; but that could avail her no more!

She had resumed her seat, and sat with her head resting upon her hand, when some one rapped upon her door.

She did not speak ; and presently the door was opened, and Mrs. Reed looked in.

"My dear Clara," she said, in her usual hypocritical tone, "here is a friend who wishes to see you."

"Who is it?" the maiden asked, starting up from her seat. But before she had moved far, Kate Van Ruter hurried into the apartment.

The two girls were quickly embraced in each others arms, and their words of mutual welcome were warm and ardent.

"Will you not leave us alone a few moments?" asked Clara, turning towards Mrs. Reed.

"You must excuse me," the hireling hostess replied. "I can't do it. I would if I could ; but I've had orders not to leave you alone with anybody."

During this speech Kate had stood with her back to the hostess, and while she so stood, she drew a letter from her bosom. Then she turned towards the woman, adroitly carrying her hand behind her. She thus stood directly between Clara and her keeper, and as she spoke she contrived to show the letter to her friend.

"Can you not allow me to speak a few moments with her?" she said, with an earnestness which appeared perfectly natural.

"No ma'am, I can't. I mustn't. Don't ask me any more."

Kate had accomplished the object of her mission, and she had no need to ask for further favor. Clara had seen the letter and grasped it quickly and hidden it in her bosom, the form of her friend hiding the movement. The visitor only wished now to explain why she had not delivered the missive before. So she drew a small book from her pocket—a copy of the New Testament which she fortunately happened to have with her, and handing it to Clara, she said, with a peculiar wink and nod which fully explained her hidden meaning :

"I ought to have given this to you before. Andrew brought it from Elizabethtown, where all is well and safe. You can read it, and I hope you may find much consolation in its perusal. I should have had it here before, if possible."

"Excuse me," interposed Mrs. Reed, advancing and

extending her hand for the book. "You must let me look at it. I have my orders."

Clara gave up the book at once, and the base woman opened it, letting the leaves slip from beneath her thumb, so as to glance between each one. Then she took it by each cover, with the leaves hanging downward, and shook it violently for some moments. She found nothing, however, and finally gave up the book to her charge.

Kate saw that there could be nothing said of any consequence—that they could not express themselves freely upon any topic of interest—so she soon took her leave, the hostess departing with her.

As soon as Clara felt sure that she should not be troubled, she locked her door, and then sat down by her lamp and took out her letter. It was from Robert. She recognized the hand in an instant. She broke it open, and read with an eager interest, as follows :

"Elizabethtown, —"

"DEAREST CLARA—You will see by this that I am safe once more. Through the noble efforts of Rose, Karmel and I made our escape. But of all this I will tell you when I see you, which I hope may not be long. I write now in great haste, for I have much business on my hands ; and beside, our mutual friend, Andrew Van Ruter, who will bear this from me, is waiting. So I will inform you of what you should at once know, and tell you the rest at some future time.

"I have just returned from the camp at Morristown, where I met Captain Eugene Deblois. I told him of your position, and of the efforts I had made in your behalf. I will not anticipate your own deductions from his deep love, by telling you of his feelings. He will redeem you, or die in the attempt. I assured him that your love for him was the same as in the days gone by, and he was made happy thereby. And now for the plan he has resolved to carry out, and which I promised to convey to you :

"He is not known in New Brunswick, so he can come there quite safely. You know Mr. Ogden, the smith, had a son who went away to sea, some years since, and who has never been heard from. Eugene will claim to be that son, as his age will just about suit ; and I will write to Ogden to bear him out in his plan. When he reaches Brunswick, he will at once set about gaining your freedom, which I have no doubt he will be able to accomplish. He will reach there on Friday, and you may rest assured he will not spend any idle time. I cannot tell you how he will move, for he will confer with Andrew and Kate ere he begins.

"Hoping and praying that we may soon meet in joy and gladness, I close my letter, and remain your affectionate brother,

"ROBERT."

Clara read this letter over twice, and then refolded it and placed it in her bosom.

EUGENE DEBLOIS ! Oh, what a thrill that name called to her heart ! He was the man upon whom her maidenly affections were centered, and to whom she had looked for the joys and happiness of the future. It was the thought of him, that had given her one of the deepest pangs in connexion with Lyndarm's threat. He was one who had been her companion long enough to learn to love her fervently and long enough, too, to reveal a heart so noble and a soul so pure that she had not only loved him, but had given him all her confidence and respect. He was a captain in the Patriot army, having raised a company of men at his own expense.

And he would be there on the morrow ! Surely she had reason now to be hopeful. At all events, when she laid her head upon her pillow that night, she was able to pray with a firmer hope than had been hers before.

* * * * *

Thomas Ogden was an old resident of the Jerseys, though he had been in Brunswick only about twelve years. The people were aware that some ten years before a son of his, fifteen years of age, went to sea, and had not since been heard from. Ogden was a blacksmith ; a Patriot at heart ; but one of those timid men who, too old to fight, chose to remain quiet. The British officers found him very useful in shoeing their horses, and so on ; so they employed him, and let his politics be with himself.

When the relief returned to the guard-room at noon on Friday, the two sentinels who had been upon the posts toward the east reported that "old Ogden's son had turned up." The news flew over the town, and before night fifty people had called upon the old smith to see his returned son.

At length, as the night set in, the old man and the young were left alone.

"My dear sir," said Ogden, frankly and kindly, "I have resolved to help you all I can. I have known Clara Pemberton and her brother for some time, and I love them both. All I can do for you I will. But you must make haste, for

there may be danger of detection. The British have suffered much recently—very much—from the Patriots, and they are watchful. I have sent for Andrew Van Ruter, and he will be here soon. You will hasten in your work—not for my sake, but for your own.”

“Of course, sir, I shall make all the haste possible,” the young man replied, “and I trust I may at some time have opportunity to prove my gratitude by more than words.”

Eugene Deblois was five-and-twenty years of age ; tall and stout, with brown hair and blue eyes, and not only a comely looking man, but possessing one of those noble, generous faces which attract alike the respect of man and the love of woman. He belonged in Amboy, and had first seen Clara while she was there with her brother. They had met and conversed together but a few times ere their love began to manifest itself ; and after a few more seasons of social intercourse, they acknowledged their love, gave the magic pledge, and were from that hour affianced.

About an hour was spent by the old smith in listening to his young guest's account of the Patriot army, and at the end of that time Andrew Van Ruter came. He had never seen Eugene before, but he loved him already ; and when he had seen and conversed with him a while his love was firmly fixed.

Ogden merely waited to welcome the new-comer, and then took his leave.

“I suppose Clara knows that I am to be here to-day ?” said Eugene.

“She has received her brother's letter,” returned Andrew. “She got it last evening.”

“Then she knows it. And now we must lay our plans. You will help me ?”

“Aye—with all my power.”

The two understood each other now, and they went at the work with a firm, mutual confidence. Andrew understood the situation of the maiden, and when he had explained it they commenced to study up such plans as they thought would work.

At eleven o'clock, Andrew Van Ruter arose to depart.

They had laid their plans, and only waited for the coming of another night to call them into effect.

CHAPTER XXI.

SUMMARY PROCEEDINGS.

SATURDAY evening came, cold, windy, and dark. The snow, a fine, dry deposit which had fallen only a few days before, was blowing about, filling the air with a continuous cloud, and piling up solid banks against doors and windows. Those who hurried through the streets were persons whose duty called them out, and even they seemed to be aiming all for home. The sentinels, ever watchful, drew their heads down into their coat-collars, and sought the least exposed points of their posts. Those whose fortune it was to be stationed in doors had ample reason for gratitude.

Within the cellar of the small cot where lived Andrew Van Ruter and his sister, two men were at work. They were Andrew and Eugene. A stone had been removed from the wall and quite a hole dug out behind its place. Into this hole the gunsmith put all his tools, and such other small articles as were of value, and could not be conveniently carried away. When this was done the dirt was taken care of, the stone returned to its proper position, and everything fixed to look as before. After this the young men left the cellar and rejoined Kate above.

It was now about eight o'clock. They had no time to spare, so they worked while they talked.

"You are sure Lyndarm has but one orderly?" said Eugene, as he fixed the flint of one of his pistols.

"Only one," returned Andrew. "The relief comes from the guard-house once in four hours, so there is only one there at the same time. The cottage is a small one. He hires it, and Mrs Reed does his work. He had a servant a short time since, but he was taken down, with fever, and is now at the barrack hospital. I am very sure we shall only find the colonel, his orderly, Mrs. Reed, and Clara there."

"Then all is safe. At any rate, I feel so."

"We will try for it," responded Andrew.

"Aye—there's to me a cause worth much peril; but were the peril much greater than it is, I might not ask you to help me."

"Then, if Clara Pemberton were to be saved, I would ask you to help me," said Andrew, with a smile.

"I believe you," cried Eugene, warmly. "But I think we are favored."

The two youths were not long in completing their arrangements. Each was armed with a brace of good pistols, carefully hidden away in his bosom; a knife, also concealed; and a short club which Andrew had fashioned from a couple of hickory knots. These latter weapons were meant for principal use, and they were formidable ones, too. They were eighteen inches in length, with a gradual swell toward the end, where they were three inches in diameter, and with handles so fashioned that they could not slip, nor be easily wrenched away. In addition to these they took several stout, closely woven bandages for gags, and a lot of strong cord, ready cut in the proper lengths, for binding wrists, elbows, and ankles.

Thus prepared, they put on their close-fitting overcoats and left the house. The wind was in their faces, and for a while they found it hard work to get along; but they became more used to it as they advanced, and finally bore it without flinching. They had one sentinel to pass, but they made their way by him unobserved, and at length reached the cot where the Colonel lived.

This cottage was not on the main street, but on a cross-road, and situated some forty or fifty rods from the principal thoroughfare. There were no buildings between it and the corner, though direct on the corner there was a large dwelling. Opposite the cottage, on the other side of the way, was an open space between two houses, said houses being nearly fifty rods apart, and at equal distances from the point in front of Lyndarm's residence.

As our adventurers entered the yard they saw that two were lighted—one chamber, and one corner room—both on the end of the building.

"There is no light in Lyndarm's private room," said Andrew. That lower light is the kitchen, and the other is in Clara's room."

"And where does the orderly keep himself?" said Eugene.

"I think in the hall. He has a small stove there. We had better knock. He will be most likely to answer the summons."

The other agree to this, and Andrew started toward the front door, leaving his companion sitting in the snow at the gate. He knocked very lightly, and almost immediately the orderly made his appearance.

"Is Colonel Lyndarm at home?" asked Andrew.

"He is," returned the soldier

"Then give me help as soon as possible. A friend of the colonel's, from New York, is at the gate. I came to show him the way here, and at the gate he fainted. Have you no companion here?"

"No. There's only me here beside the colonel."

"Then come with me. We can easily bring him in. He is a cousin of the colonel's. Bring your lantern along."

The orderly had come to the door with a lantern in his hand, and without further question he started to accompany the visitor. He knew Andrew very well, and therefore had not the slightest particle of doubt. When he reached the gate he saw a human form upon the snow, and started quickly forward and stooped over. As he did so, a slight tap from Andrew's club felled him, and ere he could recover himself the two men were upon him, his mouth was tightly bandaged, and his arms pinioned behind him.

Andrew had been careful in dealing the blow to have it only heavy enough to bewilder him for a few moments; and the result was that the fellow could now walk.

Directly back of the cottage was the stable, and having picked up the lantern, and seen that they were not observed from either of the lighted windows, they started to lead their prisoner around. He was assured that resistance would be instant death.

"We are Rebels of the rankest kind," said Eugene,

"and would as lief kill you as not, so come along. Do as we bid you, and no harm shall come to you."

The poor fellow seemed to understand this, for he walked along freely, and they soon reached the stable, the door of which was only secured with a hasp within, which was reached by sliding back a small wicket and inserting the arm. The orderly was placed upon the hay, where he would be warm ; his legs firmly bound ; and then his arms unpinioned and secured to a post in such a manner that he could not move from his sitting position. The bandage over his mouth was once more looked to, and then he was left to himself.

It was decided that the hostess should be the next one disposed of. Under ordinary circumstances those two men would have felt delicate and unpleasantly at the thought of binding and gagging an unprotected widow ; but when they remembered the fiendish purpose against a defenseless girl, to which she voluntarily sold herself for gold, they felt no compassion nor compunction.

They had the lantern, and going to the front door they entered without knocking. They knew by the light that Mrs. Reed was in the kitchen, and Andrew led the way thither at once. He took the lantern and entered first.

"Aunt Nancy," he whispered, stepping lightly forward on tiptoe, with the forefinger of the right hand upon his lips, "Kate is very anxious that you should let her—Ah—this is Charley Stanley. Don't you remember the little Charley you used to dandle on your knees in Elizabethtown ?"

This idea had come to the speaker on the moment he used it. He had meant to say that his sister was sick and wanted some herbs ; but he fortunately remembered a boy named Charles Stanley whom Mrs. Reed had nursed in Elizabethtown some years before, and he improved upon the idea as we have seen.

"Lor' sakes ! You don't mean that this is he ?" the woman uttered, approaching Eugene and gazing into his face.

"Yes, I do. But where is the colonel ?"

"He's upstairs with Miss Clara. But you *don't* mean

that this is—Why—'tain't ! 'Tain't Charley ! He never had no sich hair as—”

But the woman stopped speaking here. Andrew had adroitly thrown a table-cloth, which lay at hand, over her face, and at the same moment Eugene leaped forward and caught her hands. A pistol was now presented to her head, and under that influence she was effectually gagged and bound without noise; and as soon as she was so safely fixed that she could not possibly give the alarm, she was left alone.

Clara Pemberton sat at the fire, and Colonel James Lyndarm stood not far from her. He had already arisen to leave.

“Clara,” he said, with a diabolical look, “had I not the power in my own hands I might give up the hope of gaining you ; but I *have* the power, and you must be mine. I do hope—really, sincerely hope—that you will not drive to *punishing* you ! It would not be pleasant to me, and I am sure that you—Ha ! Who’s that coming up here ? How dared that orderly allow—”

Thus far had he spoken when the door was opened, and Andrew Van Ruter entered.

“How now, rascal ? What seek ye here ?”

Andrew cast a quick glance at Clara—a glance of warning—and then replied

“Wait a moment, Colonel Lyndarm, and you shall thank me for coming directly here. I have a friend of yours with me, who has come to save you from a great evil.”

At this juncture Eugene entered, and closed the door behind him.

“You, sir !” exclaimed the colonel, turning towards the new-comer, which movement brought his back to Andrew. “Who are you ?”

But there was no particular need for an answer, for Van Ruter gave him a blow upon the head with his club which settled him upon the floor. In an instant the two youths were upon him, and before he gave any sign of returning consciousness he was bound and gagged. His arms were tightly pinioned behind him at the elbows, and his ankles firmly bound ; and one of the bandages so secured over his

mouth that he could not even utter an audible groan above a mere guttural gurgle. He was then dragged into the adjoining room, which was a sleeping-chamber, and secured to the bed-post in such a manner that he could not possibly raise himself to a sitting posture. They were fearful that if left otherwise he might roll himself over to some chair and against that rub off the bandage from his mouth.

"There, sir!" said Eugene, after he had been secured upon his back. "Now I'll tell you the evil that threatened you: You were about planning to consummate the ruin of a poor girl, and we mean to save you from carrying such a load upon your conscience and such a crime upon your soul."

Oh, how the man might have talked had his lips been at liberty! But he could look the things he would say, and even that was bad enough.

Eugene hastened back into the other room, and the next instant held Clara to his bosom!

All they said at that time of love was a simple God's blessing,—then a fervent kiss,—and then Andrew interposed.

"Come—on with all the clothing you have, and gather up quickly your little bits of jewelry, and so on, for we have no time to waste."

The maiden was not at all perplexed. She had expected something unusual, and she was prepared for it. All her money and jewelry were in a small box, and this she gave to her lover. Then she gathered up her clothing, put on her hood and cloak, and said she was ready. She had given to Andrew the Testament Kate had left, and also a small package of books and papers.

"Here," said Eugene, "you will want something more around your neck."

"Not much," interposed Andrew. "You know we shall have the wind in our backs going home."

Yet Eugene bound the scarf he had selected about her neck, and then Van Ruter picked up the lantern and led the way from the chamber.

"Do you wish to see Mrs. Reed?" he asked of Clara, when they reached the lower hall.

"If I thought we should escape—"

"There is no fear on that score. We are prepared to shoot down the first man who may dare to interrupt us. Suppose you see her while I go to the stable."

"I will," said the maiden. And as she spoke she turned towards the kitchen, while Andrew and Eugene went to the stable.

Clara found the woman bound to her great heavy chair, with a table-cloth over her mouth, and her ankles firmly lashed together, and then secured to the lower round of the chair, so that she could not get them to the floor. But her ears were open. The persecuted girl gazed upon the wicked woman for some moments in silence, and then she said, with more of pity in her tone than of indignation :

"Mrs. Reed, I forgive you for the evil you have done towards me, and I hope God may forgive you as I do. But if you have any feeling yet left in your heart, you will not easily forget the crime that rests upon your soul. When you look upon the gold which you have received from Colonel Lyndarm may you remember that each piece is the price of your honor sold, and thenceforth try to be better. Farewell. I would not harm you for the world ; for when I remember the ill you have done me, I wish to know that no act of mine ever gave you pain."

The miserable woman used all the power she possessed to beg of the girl to set her free. She wept—she shook her head—she gazed upon her bonds—and she turned her eyes heavenward. But Clara only returned her a look of stern refusal.

"No, no," she said, as she prepared to turn away, "I cannot help you. My own life is at stake, and all through your work. You will not suffer long. At midnight you know an orderly will come to relieve the other, and then you will be set free. Farewell. I hope you may prosper, and that, possessing the wish to be happy, you may seek for it in the legitimate channel—honesty and virtue of life in every word and deed !"

With this Clara turned away, and reached the front door just in season to see her two friends ride up. Andrew dismounted, and having assisted the maiden to a seat upon

the bow of Eugene's saddle, he picked up the bundle of clothing which he had left there, and then extinguished the light of the lantern and placed it upon the outside of the threshold. After this he remounted, and then they set forward.

The wind was blowing as before, and the snow was flying thickly and furiously; but the adventurers had it now upon their backs and they dashed off without trouble. Clara pulled her warm hood well down over her face, and she assured Eugene that she was very comfortable. They reached their first place of destination without having been hailed by any sentinel, and their faith in ultimate escape was firm and strong.

"It is a fearful night," said Kate, as a blast, more fierce than before, came sweeping about the cot, and shaking it to its very foundation.

"Aye," responded Andrew hopefully. "I know 'tis a hard storm; but let us thank God that the very war of the elements, which at another time might give us trouble, may now be the shield of protection under which we shall escape!"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WOLF HAS LOST HIS PREY.

THE present meeting between Kate and Clara was less restrained than the one they last held, though even now they spoke but little of anything save the business they had before them.

"But, my dear Kate," said Clara, in a tone of apprehension, "where will be your safety after we are gone? And where will be Andrew's? They will know that he helped in this work."

"Ah, we have all that provided for," replied Andrew, who had overheard the remark. "Kate and I are going with you."

"How! Going to Elizabethtown?" cried Clara, in surprise.

"Yes. We have everything prepared to that end."

"But your house—your tools—your furniture?"

"As for the house, that will take care of itself," said the young host. "All my most valuable articles, such as tools and so on, I have hidden where I don't think they can be found. My furniture may be confiscated; but I think I can sustain the loss."

"I think you can," interposed Eugene, with a meaning look and nod.

"But you must do all this just for me," resumed Clara.

"For me, you and Kate must leave your home and—"

"Stop, Clara," interrupted Andrew. "Had it not been for your salvation I might not have left here at present; but how long I could have remained is not so certain. The British already suspect me, and I know that a watch has been set upon my movements since my return from Elizabethtown. I have thought seriously of leaving before this. But, aside from all that, I fancy that the lasting weal of my friends is worth this much trouble on my part; so we'll prepare for our departure, and leave the rest for some future consideration."

Clara showed in the look with which she regarded her noble host how grateful she was; but she knew that time pressed, and she went with Kate to prepare for the toilsome journey before them.

The two horses which had been brought from the colonel's stable, and which belonged to that officer, had been taken to the little barn where Andrew kept his own horse, and where Eugene's beast was now put up. The men had made all their preparations, and only waited now for the girls to be ready.

The extra clothing of both brother and sister had been packed up in two snug bundles, and were to be secured to the saddles, while all such things as were not likely to be wanted through the winter had been hidden away with the tools.

It was just ten o'clock when the four horses were led up to the door. The girls were assisted to their saddles—Kate riding upon her brother's horse, and Clara upon Eugene's—and their clothing secured about them, so that the wind

could not blow the garments off or open. The house was then locked up, after which the men mounted and gathered up their reins.

The wind was from the southeast, and the course of the travelers very near northeast, so they would have it for a while on their right side ; but they thought little of this. They remembered Andrew's remark: that this very storm might prove the cover under which their escape would be safe, and therefore they faced the cutting blast without flinching. But they found it a tough one when they reached the road, and for a few moments even the horses needed more urging than ordinary. The snow blew directly across the way, and in some places deep drifts had been piled up in the path. Yet they kept bravely on, taking the Rahway road, as they considered that the safest.

Two or three sentinels were passed, and whether they saw the travelers or not, our friends could not tell. Andrew knew where two of them were stationed, and they dashed passed at the top of their speed. Eugene was sure he heard the second one hail them, but they paid no attention to it. They expected the guard would fire upon them if he observed them, but it was not done ; so both the young men thought it most likely that in the wild fury of the storm they had passed unobserved.

"Is it not strange," said Clara, addressing her lover, "how simple activity can keep the body up? Under ordinary circumstances I could not hear this trial ; but now it is only pastime."

"You speak truly," returned Eugene. "But," he added in a tone of concern, "do you not suffer now?"

"Not at all—not at all," she quickly responded. "There is really something grand in it—something imposing—in breasting such a storm. Ah, no ; my heart's too warm and ardent to suffer from any such outward cause as this. But I fear Kate may suffer."

"Are you speaking of me?" asked the latter, who had overheard the remark.

"Yes," replied Eugene. "Clara was fearing that you might suffer from this storm."

"No—no—not I. Why—I am bundled up so that only

my face is exposed ; and even that I contrive to hide in such a manner behind Andrew that I do not suffer. No, no—don't fear on my account. I am only too happy that we are able to be here.

"I wonder how Colonel Lyndarm is enjoying himself?" remarked Andrew with a light laugh.

"He must be feeling rather unpleasantly," returned Eugene. "If no one calls upon him on business he won't get clear till midnight."

"He won't be likely to have calls on such a night," added Clara. "The orderly will be relieved at twelve o'clock and then I suppose he'll be found."

"Aye," cried Kate. "And by that time we'll be beyond the reach of pursuit."

"Yes," said Andrew ; "and we are beyond it now. Every minute makes the going worse and worse, so that if we are followed the pursuers will not get over the ground we have passed as swiftly as we have done."

The wind still howled its furious notes, and the snow still whirled about in the night air in the dense clouds ; but the darkness was not so intense as before, for the moon was up. Its face was not to be seen, nor could its place be judge by the eye ; yet it dissipated much of the gloom, and the horses were able to move along more freely. The girls still laughed and chatted in joyful tones, and their companions had no more cause of fear. They were surely out of the way of successful pursuit, and they were relieved of all anxiety on account of the maidens.

It was near midnight, and the party came to a house in which a light was seen. They judged that they were then within two hours' ride of Elizabethtown, and perhaps nearer.

"Would you like to stop here and rest ?" asked Andrew, as they came nearly opposite the house, turning to the girls as he spoke.

"No, no," quickly returned Clara ; "it may be a Tory's den. Let us be sure we're safe ere we stop."

"But we are within the American lines."

"Yet it may not be safe. Oh, 'twould be dreadful to lose all now !"

"Then we'll go on."

"See!" uttered Eugene, "there's somebody looking out the window. Don't you observe?"

They looked at the window through which they had seen the light, and plainly saw a man peering out, with his hands spread out upon each side of his face, to shut out the reflection of the lamplight. In a moment more he disappeared, and ere long the door of the house was opened, and a man with a lantern in his hand, came out.

"Hallo! hallo!" he cried, at the top of his voice, so as to be heard above the howl of the storm; "Here!—this way! *Eugene!*"

"He calls me!" exclaimed the captain, drawing in his rein; "come—let's ride up."

Thus speaking, Eugene turned towards the open door, and rode up—the rest following close behind him.

"*Eugene?*" cried the man with the lantern, interrogatively.

"Yes; that's my name."

"And Clara?" resumed the man.

"*'Tis Robert!*" the sister exclaimed, freeing her foot from the stirrup, and leaping down into the snow.

It was Robert! And in a very few moments she was clasped to his bosom!

There was no more question about stopping. Good Adam Warner came out, with Karmel close behind him, and bade the travelers hurry into the house, while he took care of the horses. He knew very well that the intelligent beast would go towards a barn on such a night without much urging, so he persuaded the two young men to go in with the girls. He led one of the horses, and the others gladly followed.

"Are you not nearly frozen, Clara?" the brother asked, as he held his restored sister again to his bosom.

"Oh, no, Robert. Upon my word, I don't know that I ever felt more comfortable. Ah—I've had happy thoughts to sustain me on this journey."

"But, Andrew, how is this?" our hero asked, turning to his friend, and speaking in a tone of astonishment; "why do I see you and our dear, good Kate here?"

"I'll tell you," interposed Eugene, quickly; "the man who helped me knock down a British colonel and a sentinel, could not very well remain in Brunswick."

"Ah, Andrew!" cried Robert, in a tremulous tone, while a bright moisture started out in his eyes, "you have done more now than I can ever do for you!"

"Yet I think you would save my sister Kate, if she were in danger," Andrew returned, as Robert took his hand.

"I hope I may never have the opportunity," our hero said; "though if trouble befall her, God grant that I may be near!"

At this juncture the host returned, and was speedily introduced to the new-comers; and after this there followed a happy season of relating adventures. While Eugene was describing how they disposed of the wicked widow and the polygamous colonel, old Adam could not sit still. He had to leap up and clap his hands half a score of times, and his ejaculations of "good!" "capital!" "Oh, ge-whittaker!" "Jerewsalem and judgment!" and so on, were plainly indicative of the intense satisfaction he experienced. He only one source of regret, and that was that he could not, by any possible means "see that consarned old kurnel with his arms and legs and mouth bound up, and lashed to a bed-post!" He assured his guests that if 'twas pleasant, and there wasn't much danger, he'd travel that distance in a minute to see such a sight.

Robert said he had expected that Eugene would return that night, and having business with Warner, he had come there to meet them.

"I felt a strong presentiment," he added, "that you would come to-night. To be sure there was a deep fear with it, but still the impression was vivid; and hence we sat up. Since ten o'clock I have watched the window pretty steadily."

At two o'clock the party adjourned till morning, and Adam showed his guests to their sleeping-places. Two of the men had to make a bed upon the floor; but that was good enough—so good that it required some time to decide who should have the privilege. But Robert and Karmel

carried the day, and proceeded at once to spread their deer-skins and blankets.

The storm still raged without, and the wind continued to howl forth its mad songs ; but within that humble cot there were hearts full of joy and gladness, looking beyond the storm to Him who controlled it, with gratitude and praise.

Robert was as happy as any, but yet while he thanked God for the safety of his beloved sister he could not forget to pray for the safety of one other who was not yet wholly free from danger.

* * * * *

At midnight a single soldier went groping through the storm from the guard-room to the house where Colonel Lyndarm resided. When he reached the yard he found a huge bank of snow piled up before the entrance, but he wallowed through it and gained the door. He entered, but there was no light, and the fire in the stove, which stood in the hall, had gone out. He remembered that he had hit something with his foot on entering, and on turning back he found it to be a lantern. He managed to rake out a live coal from the embers in the stove, and with this he lighted the lantern-lamp, and then gazed about him for the man he was to relieve.

But where was he ? He called, in a low tone, for "Dennis." But no Dennis came. Perhaps he was in the kitchen. He went there to see. He found no Dennis ; but he found something else. He found Mrs. Reed bound, hand and foot, lashed to her great chair, with the lower part of her face enveloped in a table-cloth. He set her free as quickly as possible, and then asked what all this meant.

It was some moments ere the woman could speak. She tried first to stand ; but that was beyond her power. Her limbs were so benumbed and stiffened from being bound in an awkward position so long that they would not answer her will. Her tongue, however, was more ready. She explained to the orderly all that had happened to her, with the addition of such items as her fancy chanced to dictate. They—"the villains"—had "throwed knives" at her, "fired off pistols" at her—"eenamost choked her to death,"

and divers other horrible things which no common woman could have survived.

"But where is Dennis?" asked the soldier.

"It's a marcy if they hain't murdered him and buried him up in the snow!"

"Didn't you hear anything till they came in here?"

"No—not a thing. They crept in like two cats, and would sartin' 'a murdered me if they hadn't 'a' been afraid I'd 'ave made a noise!"

The orderly plainly saw that he could get no truth from the hostess, so he resolved to go and find the colonel. He went to his private room and knocked, but getting no answer he looked in. There was no colonel there. He next went up to his chamber, and knocked there, but with the same result. He then opened the door and looked in; and found no colonel there either. He was upon the point of descending when he happened to think of the room of the young girl; so he went there.

This room he entered without knocking. The fire was gone out on the hearth, and the room was empty. He saw the chamber door open, and he looked in there. He started quickly forward, for he saw his colonel upon the floor, bound and gagged as the hostess had been, and lashed to the bed-post! He set his lantern down, and quickly cast the bandage off from his superior's mouth, and then proceeded to set him free.

Lyndarm arose, but it was with the utmost difficulty that he managed to walk to a chair. His first word was the name of a place where wicked people are supposed to go. The next was a contraction of condemnation. After this he indulged in quite an extended vocabulary of words "neither brave, polite, nor wise." Finally, however, he came down to tangible language, and commenced the new course of speech, by asking the man if he had just come on.

"Yes, sir," the soldier replied.

"And what have you found? Where is Callahan and Mrs. Reed?"

"I have found the woman in the kitchen bound just as you were, sir; but Dennis Callahan I can't find."

Lyndarm was not yet calm enough to speak calmly upon

any topic. He choked, and raved, and ground his teeth in a rage utterly impotent. But finally he managed to find coherent words enough to bid the orderly go and find Dennis.

The soldier went below with his lantern, and having looked through such rooms in the lower part of the house as he had not previously visited, he went out into the front yard. There was but one other place on the premises where a man could be hidden, and that was the stable. So thither he went, and he found his companion as the Rebels had left him.

Poor Dennis was set free ; and as his seat had been an easy one, upon the soft hay, he could use his legs quite well, though there was but little strength in his arms. The two repaired to the colonel's room at once, where Dennis was requested to relate what had befallen him. He could only tell, however, that he had been knocked down, bound, and gagged, and then dragged away into the stable. He said Andrew Van Ruter was one of them ; but he did not plainly see the face of the other.

But Lyndarm knew who the other was. He had recognized in him the son of old Ogden ; and he was upon the point of saying so when a loud knocking was heard at the lower door.

The orderly hurried down, and when he returned he was followed by Thomas Ogden, the very man of whom the colonel had been thinking.

"Colonel Lyndarm," he said, in a nervous, flurried manner, "you will pardon me for this unseasonable visit ; but circumstances would not permit of a delay. The young man who came here and pretended to be my son I fear is an impostor. He has gone off—he left the house some time after seven o'clock—and I fear he may be a Rebel spy. When he first went out he said he was going to call upon a friend, and I suspected nothing ; but when I awoke at midnight, and found that he had not returned, I became alarmed. I hurried to the barn, and found his horse gone, and then at once started to give the alarm. I could arouse no one at the general's, so I came here."

This was told with such an air of sincerity that the colo-

nel swallowed it all, and from that moment there was no more suspicion of any weight upon the smith. He was questioned quite sharply, but came out without contradicting himself, or exciting any doubt as to his veracity.

As soon as the colonel could walk he had orders sent to the guard-room, and a company of troopers sent in pursuit. Dennis reported that the Rebels had taken the best two horses in the stable; and upon going to Van Ruter's stable, and finding his horse gone and his house locked up, they of course knew that the party had fled.

Twelve troopers, upon stout, powerful horses, were sent on the river road, and twelve on the Rahway road, with directions to bring back the Rebels, if they found them, dead or alive. It was past one o'clock when they set out.

Shortly after daylight, the troopers returned. They had found nothing of the fugitives nor had they been able to gain any information concerning them. It seemed impossible that two young girls could have ridden any distance in such a storm; but still it must have been so.

There was considerable excitement in the camp for a while; but they were so used to strange freaks on the part of the Rebels, that it soon wore away, and was ere long eclipsed by the capture of a whole British company of foragers, by a party of Rebels, with Karmel at their head.

But though others forgot the events of that night, Colonel James Lyndarm remembered them most keenly. Not only had he suffered an indignity which rankled in his bosom, but he had lost a prize for the keeping of which he would even have sacrificed his honor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ROSALIE'S EXPERIENCE.

WE must return now to Rosalie Lincoln.

The unhappy girl sat by her window on that afternoon which was to have seen the return of Elroy; but she saw nothing of him. It grew dark, but no Elroy came. Night passed, and in the morning—Thursday morning—she

arose faint at heart, and sick in body. Her head ached, and the blood coursed swiftly and hotly through her veins, She went to her window and looked out upon the snow, and she felt as though it would be a relief to be buried up in it. She raised the sash, and having gathered a handful of the frozen mass, she applied it to her brow. It afforded her a slight sense of relief, but it did not mitigate her pain.

She heard the fire crackling in the next room—the apartment which had been given to her for a sitting-room—and she went in there and sat down. The pain in her head grew more intense as she thus sat up by the fire, and she moved back. But the fire which worked upon her system so painfully was within! It dwelt in her heart, and it coursed through her veins.

Ere long a serving-woman came up, and when she looked upon the maiden she started with astonishment and fear.

“Why! Bless my soul, Miss Rose, you are sick! you look dreadfully!”

“Alas! I feel dreadfully,” murmured the poor girl, raising her hand to her brow and pressing it there.

“But you’re real sick,” the woman said. “Something must be done.” And as she thus spoke, she approached, and kneeling down by Rosalie’s side she took one of her hands.

“Why—mercy! how hot your flesh is! Don’t you feel very sick?”

“Yes. Oh, my head aches, and I am sick—sick!”

“So you are—very sick. You must have the doctor.”

“But tell me,” the maiden cried, with a sudden effort, “has Elroy returned?”

“No—he hasn’t come yet. But they expect him every minute. He’ll be real sorry when he knows you’re sick. But then you can’t be married while you’re as sick as you are now.”

“Do you think they would let me off?” the girl uttered eagerly.

“My—how could they help it?” the woman returned, showing by her look and tone that she was surprised at the manner in which the question had been asked.

“Alas!” resumed Rosalie, raising her hand again to her

brow. "I fear they will force it upon me. Oh, I wish I were sleeping with my mother!"

"But she's dead!" said the servant quickiy.

"Aye—and I, if I were with her, should be dead to all this pain and anguish!"

As the unhappy girl thus spoke, she bowed her head, and covering her face with her hands, she burst into tears. She wept like a sick child—for all her fortitude, all her hope, and all her strength were gone; and she was moreover racked with pain most intense.

The serving-woman gazed upon her in utter astonishment. She seemed to be not only surprised, but her face showed a feeling of pity and sorrow as well.

This woman's name was Mary Van Brunt. She was between forty and fifty years of age—a sober, industrious, crusty thing, who made few friends, and who seemed to wish for but few. Most people called her a "cross-grained old maid," and they evidently supposed they were correct. She made free with no one, but attended to her own concerns, and bade others attend to theirs. She was seldom seen to smile, and was never known, by those who knew her, to express anything like joy or gladness. So she had been selected by Mr. Pemberton as a fit person to take charge of Rosalie. She seemed to dislike young, pretty girls, and he was sure she would be strict and severe with her. She was large in frame, with a full, red face; and though not decidedly ugly looking, yet she could lay no claims to beauty.

As we said before Mary Van Brunt gazed upon the maiden with surprise, and finally ventured to take one of her hands.

"Do you feel very bad?" she asked tenderly.

Rosalie raised her eyes to the woman's face, and she saw a look of sympathy there. She caught it in an instant, as a drowning man might seize a floating plank; and with a deep sob she sank forward, and pillowed her burning brow upon the attendant's shoulder.

"Oh!" she murmured, as she placed one arm about her neck, "be my friend! Be my friend, and I will love you—I will pray for you always!"

"I will be your friend!" cried Mary, winding her arms

almost about the form of the girl. "But tell me—don't you love Elroy Pemberton?"

"No, no—I cannot."

"And daren't ye tell him so?"

"Tell him so? Oh, he knows it very well! I have told him so a hundred times."

"You have?"

"Yes. Day before yesterday, in this very room, I got down upon my knees to him, and prayed him to let me go free! but he would not. Oh, I have told him many times."

"I thought ye loved him."

"Oh, no—no! I never loved him, only as a brother."

"Well—I hope he mayn't come back as he expects! That's all I've got to say."

The woman spoke very emphatically, and thus showed at once that she, too, had no love for him. And as she gazed now upon the poor girl every sympathy of her soul was awakened, and her love went forth and enfolded the suffering being who had asked for her friendship. From that hour Rosalie had one more true friend.

"But," cried Mary Van Brunt, lifting Rosalie's head from her shoulder, and starting to her feet, "something must be done for ye. Could ye eat something?—say a little piece of toast?"

"No—I am too sick. I must lie down again," the sufferer answered, trying to arise; but in vain, she was dizzy and faint.

"You just wait a few minutes," said Mary, "and I'll have a place fixed for ye."

As she spoke she went into the bed-room, and having taken off the bolster, pillows, and two or three coverlets, she brought them out and fixed them upon a long settee which stood in the room. After fixing these things, she drew the settee up nearer to the fire and assisted Rosalie to reach it and lie down upon it. She then drew one of the coverlets over her, and having bade her rest easy for a few minutes, she left the room.

At that moment there came a sense of thankfulness to the maiden's soul. It was not a distinct emotion—it was not mere thankfulness for the kindness of the woman who had just

left her ; but it was a dim, undefinable feeling, which came beside the deep gratitude she felt towards Mary Van Brunt. Perhaps the fact of Elroy's having not yet returned may have helped produce it ; and so, too, the deep sickness which was upon her might last some time, and thus delay the fatal nuptials.

Ere long the door was opened and Mr. Richard Pemberton entered. He saw at once that the maiden was very sick, and having spoken with her for a few moments he left, remarking, as he turned away, that he would send for a doctor.

The doctor came, and when he saw the patient he pronounced her disease a severe, settled fever. He ordered that her bed should be moved to some place where she could have a fire, and that she should be immediately placed in a state of rest and quiet. He examined her case thoroughly, and then dealt out his medicine. Mary Van Brunt was relieved from all other duty, and directed to watch with and nurse her.

The poor girl's season of trial and excitement had shattered her nervous system ; and then her exposure on the night of her flight had served to sow the seeds of the fever. Intense mental suffering had hidden the disease in its incipient stages, so that it now came upon her fully developed and with all its enervating power.

* * * * *

Rosalie had been sick a week. She had suffered much, and was still suffering. Every day she had asked if Elroy had returned, and each time Mary told her that he had not. It was very strange—they had both said so—and many were the conjectures upon the probable cause of his absence.

"He has heard of my sickness," said Rosalie, "and so remains away on business."

"I think not," returned Mary. "If it was so, then his father would know something about it, which I am sure is not the case now. Mr. Pemberton is very much concerned, and I am sure he has no idea of where Elroy is."

It was Thursday evening. The doctor had just gone, and Mary was in the kitchen preparing some gruel. While she was thus engaged she heard a rap upon the back door. She went, and found Kate Van Ruter there.

"May I not see Rose?" the girl asked, imploringly.

Mary knew that there was great love between Rosalie and Kate, and she could not refuse. She knew she was disobeying orders, but she cared not for that.

"If ye'll go up as easy as ye can, and hide if ye hear anybody coming, ye may go."

Kate readily promised all this, and was at once conducted to the chamber-door.

"Be careful and don't let her exert herself too much," the nurse whispered; and with this she opened the door and ushered the visitor in.

Rosalie looked up as she heard the door close, but the lamp burned low, and she could not see plainly.

"Is it you, Mary?" she asked.

"It isn't Mary," whispered the intruder, disguising her voice, so as not to startle the invalid too suddenly.

"Who is it?"

"You won't speak loud, nor be surprised, will you? It's me. It's Kate."

"Kate Van Ruter? Oh, dear, good Kate! Oh, God bless you! It is Kate herself—come to see me!"

It was like a ray of heavenly light in that sick chamber, the coming of one whom she had long loved, one of her own age, and one who had been as a sister to her. She drew Kate down upon the pillow by her side, and placing her cheek against hers she murmured forth her soul full of love and gratitude.

Kate told of many things that had happened; and Rosalie told of all that had happened to her.

"Have you heard from Elroy yet?" the visitor asked, when she considered the ice fairly broken.

"No," answered Rosalie, "not a word. Can you imagine where he is?"

"Well—yes—I think I can guess pretty nearly what has become of him."

"Ah," cried the invalid, with a sudden start, "you know!—you know! I can see by your look. You have come to tell me. You have, haven't you?"

"Yes, Rose, dear—I have. On the evening of the day on which he left you he went to a place near Newark, and

there met a band of Tories that had been formed under his charge. Robert Pemberton and Karmel had been at work and gained information of the whole affair, and made sure arrangements for being present at that very meeting. So they had a company of their own men near at hand, and all the Tories were captured, Elroy among the rest."

"Captured !—Robert captured him !" murmured Rose, gratefully.

"Yes—and will hold him too. Elroy tried hard to get away, but he couldn't do it. Andrew had seen Robert and told him all. Oh, how happy Robert must have felt ! Andrew said he was like a crazy man when he told him that you were to be married so soon. But he was coming on. He had made all his arrangements to come when he so fortunately found the bridegroom among the prisoners. Wasn't it curious ? Don't it seem almost as though God meant that it should be so ?—that you should be saved in that way ?"

"It does, surely," returned Rosalie. "Oh, how fortunate ! They will not let him go ?" she added, eagerly, and with some apprehension. "They will not let him be bought off ?"

"No. General Washington promised that he shall not be set free while there is a British army in the Jerseys. So you have nothing to fear on that score."

"Oh, I am glad of that ! And Robert is safe ?"

"Yes. And he is doing well, too. He is thought much of by the people, and Washington reposes the utmost confidence in him. He is a noble young man, and I am sure you have reason to be proud of his love. I'm very sure I should."

"I do feel proud of it, Kate. I do feel proud, for I know he is worthy of any woman's love. But how is Clara ?"

"Andrew tells me a plan has been made for her escape. I have just come from there. I carried her a letter from Robert. I could not stop to hear what was in it, for Mrs. Reed would not leave us for a moment. I hope she will be free."

And so did Rosalie hope so. The two conversed a while longer and might have kept it up quite late, had not Mary

come up and interrupted them. Kate arose to leave, but she promised to call again.

"My—you look better," exclaimed the nurse, after Kate had gone.

"And I am better, Mary," the invalid replied joyfully. "Oh, I have had some medicine to-night that reached the right spot. It has driven off the heaviest load that lay upon my soul. Elroy is a prisoner in the Patriot camp, and will be held until the British leave Jersey!"

Mary Van Brunt was really happy to hear this, and she expressed her satisfaction plainly.

And from that hour Rosalie began to improve. The heaviest weight was taken from her heart, and when her mind was free the body began to mend. She had one season of sorrow, but it was a short one. It only lasted while the impulse of a vain regret was upon her.

On Saturday evening, as she lay, or rather sat with her back supported by pillows, Kate Van Ruter came again. She came to inform Rosalie that both she and Andrew were going to leave the town. She explained the plan for the rescue of Clara, and said that, of course, they could not remain after that was done.

Rosalie began to weep.

"Don't do so, Rose," the visitor urged. "You know is for the good of all—"

"Stop, Kate; oh, do not misunderstand me. I know it is for your good. But I was wishing that I could go, too. You will go and be with Robert."

"And at some time you shall be the same. But will you send some word?"

Yes—Rose had a word to send—a word of love—and she bade Kate to deliver it faithfully.

The busy girl could not stop long, for she had much on her hands; so she received her message, and having held the invalid to her bosom for some moments she imprinted a warm kiss upon her lips, and then turned away.

For a while after Kate was gone Rosalie felt very sad and down-hearted; but she at length overcame it; and when on the next day she learned that the party had got safely off, she was thankful and glad.

Sir Arthur and Mr. Pemberton were very nervous and uneasy. The latter had written to Washington, and informed him that he could have any Rebel prisoner below the grade of a major, he would name, in return for Elroy ; and Washington had replied that on no account would he release, either by exchange or otherwise, any American who had been taken in the act of inciting American subjects to join in the war against their country.

"Well," said Sir Arthur, after the reply of the American commander had been duly considered, "we can keep the girl until spring, and then I think Elroy will be released. At any rate I do not think they will keep him after the King's troops have left the Jerseys."

"That must be so," returned Pemberton. "It is hard, but I suppose we must make the best of it. The wedding will be just as good six months from now."

"Just exactly, only Rosalie must be watched. However, we can do that easily enough. Oh, why were not those two Rebels hung while we had them in our power !"

This was a regret which dwelt in the baronet's mind continually. He thought of the youth who had gained his daughter's heart, and he wished that he was dead. And he thought, too, of the old scout. But while he mentioned Robert's name freely in his anger, he kept the name of Karmel to himself. There was something in his memory of that old man which was deeper than fear, and more terrible than physical danger.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BAFFLED FOR THE WHILE.

DURING that long, hard winter, the British suffered more than they were willing to own. Washington's position afforded him many opportunities to harass and annoy them, and many sources from whence they had expected forage and provisions were cut off. The recovery of the Jerseys from a powerful army, and that, too, by a force

already regarded as defeated, was looked upon, not only in this country but throughout Europe, as one of the most brilliant achievements of any war. Washington never displayed his clear, calm, far-reaching wisdom and sagacity more than he did during that winter passed in New Jersey. Not only did he escape most of the evil aimed at him by his enemy, but many bands of Tories were effectually broken up.

In all that region, there were no two men who did more service for the cause of liberty than did Robert Pemberton and Karmel, the scout. In fact, there were none others who did as much as they did. The greatest evil apprehended and feared by the American commander was the rising of the Tories. The British army, with its center at New Brunswick, was a tangible affair; and Washington knew just how to watch it. And all through that hard season, the British suffered the most. But with regard to the Tories, the case was different.

These traitors arose on all hands, like snakes from the tall grass of a swamp, and their existence was likely to remain a secret until they were ready to bite. They were men who had associated with the Patriots, who had heard their plans talked over, and who knew where Rebel stores were concealed. Hence they were doubly dangerous—as they not only counted each a man for the enemy, but they carried with them intelligence of American affairs which even British spies could not gain.

Robert and Karmel managed to get upon the track of these fellows, and in most cases they either took them prisoners, or effectually broke them up. They had secret assistance, through which they gained much information that could never have been obtained by open means. Through all the country they were known as "The Tory Trappers," and surely the appellation was not inappropriate. By the Patriots they were beloved and honored, while by the British they were feared and hated. And by the latter a heavy price was set upon their heads. But it availed them nothing. Every Patriot's house was a place of refuge for the Tory Trappers, and every Patriot was a friend and a protector.

The winter passed away, and in the spring the two armies

began to move. General Washington waited to observe the inclination of the enemy before he moved. Once, about the middle of June, Howe supposed he had set a trap in which he could take the whole American army ; but Washington outwitted him, and at length, on the 30th of the same month, the enemy removed to Staten Island. New Brunswick was once more free from British troops, and the town gradually assumed its wonted appearance. The people once more breathed freely, and the Patriots who had been forced to leave their homes during the presence of the invaders now returned. Many of them came back only to find their property all confiscated, their houses ruined, and their neighbors unable to assist them. But they had the true Yankee energy to bear them up, and under its influence their shops, their gardens, and their fields soon began to yield the means of support.

Rosalie Lincoln had been removed to her father's residence ; and here she had recovered from her sickness ; and there she had once more the friendship of good Aunt Patience. She saw little of her father, and when she did see him he had no word of kindness for her, and no smile ever beamed upon her from his hard, cold face. He still assured her that she should marry with the man he had chosen, and she well knew that nothing could move him from his purpose.

Andrew Van Ruter and his sister returned as soon as the British had left ; and though they found their house rather the worse for the use to which the enemy had put it, and much of their furniture either broken or missing, yet the secret repository in the cellar had not been discovered, and thus their most valuable articles were safe. Eugene had made Andrew keep the two horses which had been taken from Lyndarm's stable ; and as they were very valuable ones they sold for more than double the value of all that had been lost.

One bright morning the neighbors heard the " tink, tink, tink," of Andrew's hammer ; and as the well-remembered music fell upon their ears, they realized more than ever that the old times had returned, and that the enemy were gone.

The summer-time had come ere Washington left the Jerseys, and it was not until July that Elroy Pemberton was released from his imprisonment. He took a solemn oath that he would never again take up arms against the Patriot cause, nor render aid and comfort to the enemy ; and then he was allowed to depart.

* * * * * *

Rosalie sat in the little chamber where her mother had died. She would sit there, for the memory of the mild and gentle spirit that once pervaded it, and which seemed to pervade it still, had a soothing influence upon her. Had her life been bright and joyous, and all her hopes clothed with the cheering garb of faith, she might have shunned that chamber as one of gloom ; but it was not so now. This world was dark to her, and she only found consolation in thinking of the next. She knew that Elroy Pemberton would soon return ; and then she must pass the fatal ordeal ! Where was the source of hope ? What power of earth should overcome the stern, inflexible will of her father ? Alas ! she could think of none !

It was in the afternoon as she sat there, and the birds were singing to her from the great linden trees. She was watching a golden robin, that had hung its quaint nest from one of the slender twigs high up above the window, when the sound of footsteps upon the sidewalk arrested her attention. She gazed down, and saw a tall, well-dressed man approaching the house. Her breast gave a fearful bound, and then sank within her. It was Elroy Pemberton !

She hoped that she should not be called down ; but the hope was vain. In half an hour Patience came to her door and told her that her father wanted her in the parlor. She waited only long enough to gain what of self-control she could command, and then went down.

It was a severe task to go into that room ; and she hesitated some moments at the door to still the tumultuous beating of her heart. But finally she entered. She saw the man upon whom her joy was to be wrecked, and at first the room seemed to be unsteady, and the various articles about her to be swimming in circles. She overcame all this

with a strong effort, and was in time to extend her hand as Elroy arose to take it.

"My dear Rosalie," the young man said, "you are looking very well; and I must say that the sight of you almost makes up for the long season of suffering I have endured."

"Aye," added Sir Arthur, bitterly. "And suffered at the hands of a near relative—at the hands of one who hoped thereby to prevent the marriage we had planned. Do you think you could ever again look upon that villain without feeling the detestation he so richly merits?"

"Did you understand what I said, Rosalie?" the baronet asked, after he had waited some moments for an answer.

"Was your question directed to me?" returned the maiden, trembling at every joint.

"Of course it was. Did you not hear it?"

"Not plainly, sir."

"I remarked that all the suffering Elroy had endured had been put upon him by a near relative, and by one who hoped thus to prevent the marriage we had planned. And I asked you if you could ever look upon him again save with that feeling of detestation which he so richly merits. Now you understand me?"

And still the poor girl did not answer. She gazed down upon the floor, and her frame trembled violently.

"I *wish* you would answer me!" whispered her father.

The peculiar emphasis of the remark startled the girl, and she quickly said:

"You have no right to ask me such a question, sir. You know my feelings, and you know that if I answer at all I must either speak falsely, or deeply offend you."

"Aha!—you haven't got over your folly, then?"

"What folly, sir?"

"Of imagining that you love that young Rebel."

There was a low, brutal irony in the tone and manner of this speech that proved the "last ounce upon the camel's back." Rosalie had borne enough already. They knew her feelings, and all this could only be to trifle with them. She had contained herself until "forbearance ceased to be a virtue," and she did so no longer.

"You speak of Robert Pemberton, sir," she said, with a

flashing eye and a quivering lip. "You know I love him—you know I love him as I hate his enemies! If he has done injury to any man he did it to prevent a greater injury to one whom he loved, and who was powerless to help herself!"

"Elroy Pemberton!" cried the mad baronet, starting to his feet and fairly foaming with rage, "are you the man to take a decided step?"

"I trust so, sir," the youth replied, in amazement.

"Then we'll put a stop to this work at once! We know not what plots these accursed Rebels may have hatched up! The certificates are all drawn up and duly sealed and acknowledged; *you shall be this girl's husband ere you leave this room!*"

As the mad man thus spoke, he strode to the bell-cord and pulled it violently. Patience quickly answered the summons.

"Send Thomas here!" he ordered, imperiously.

The old housekeeper looked upon Rosalie, and when she saw how deathly pale she was, and how she seemed to press her hand upon her heart as though she was faint, she could not resist the impulse to hurry to her side.

"Did you hear me?" thundered Lincoln.

The old woman started up in affright.

"What—what—a—are ye going to do with the dear young girl?" she uttered, forgetting all fear for self in her fear for Rose. "Oh, ye shan't hurt her!"

"Fool! idiot!—we are not going to hurt her! Go and send Thomas here immediately!"

Aunt Patience dared not hesitate longer. She went out; and in a few moments the man-servant came in.

"Thomas," spoke the master, "go over to 'Squire Parker's, and tell him his attendance is required here at once."

"Y-e-s, sir," returned Thomas, in a bewildered manner. "Shall I wait for it, sir?"

"Wait for what?"

"What ye said ye wanted, sir."

"Dolt! I want the 'squire to come over himself!"

"Oh!—y-e-s."

"Now go at once."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

The unlettered serving-man left the apartment, and after he was gone the baronet commenced pacing to and fro across the floor.

"I'll see how much longer this can last!" he muttered, half to himself, but meant for his child's ears. "It has grown enough! We've had just about as much of open, defiant rebellion, as is comfortable!"

And so he kept on muttering, at times stopping and gazing upon Rosalie, and then moving on. At length there came a knock at the outer door, and in a few moments more the justice was ushered into the room.

Abraham Parker, Esquire, was a tall, slim, hard-visaged man, and it required but a single look at his face to assure the beholder that he would do anything for money.

The usual salutations were passed; and then the baronet said:

"I believe, sir, I have the authority to answer for my child?"

"You have, sir," replied the justice obsequiously.

"Even in a marriage ceremony?"

"Most assuredly, sir."

"Then we will have this ceremony performed as quickly as possible."

"You have the necessary documents, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; they were drawn up over six months ago."

"Ah—well. Then we may proceed as quickly as you please."

"It must be at once, sir!" Sir Arthur said, emphatically.

"Elroy, you will take her hand at once. She will not refuse you. *I don't think she will!*"

Let us look back just one minute:

At the moment when the justice answered Lincoln's second question, Rosalie was gazing vacantly at the window. She saw a dark form pass, and as she concentrated her sight she was sure she recognized Robert Pemberton! He turned his face toward her, but seemed not to be able to see anything through the glass. For a single instant her strength left her, and she sank back in her seat. Both

Elroy and the baronet saw the emotion, but they little dreamed what caused it.

It was through the front window she had seen her lover, and he was passing up the street towards the residence of Van Ruter. The parlor was a corner room, and the end windows looked the same way Robert had gone. Rosalie looked in that direction, and saw him upon the sidewalk. He had stopped and turned, and was gazing towards the house as though he were debating whether to come back and call. Once he turned and moved on a single step, and then hesitated again.

It was a wild, thrilling thought which flashed over the maiden's mind at that moment. But it came—and it was the only earthly hope. It was a moment of life or death with her. Aye—of life or a state to which death would be far preferable.

"She will not refuse you. *I don't think she will!*" said Lincoln.

Elroy rose and moved towards the golden prize. She saw him coming, and she started to her feet. She cast one look into his hard, cold eye—she saw the icy gleam that shot forth from it—and then she turned towards the window. It was open, and beneath it was a narrow passageway leading from the back door to the road. With one wild thrill of fear and of hope combined she made the leap! She reached the passage in safety—and to the road was but a single bound.

"Robert! Robert!"

Captain Pemberton heard his name pronounced, and he turned—and in a few seconds more Rosalie was upon his bosom.

"Save me! save me! Oh, the man is there to marry me! Don't let them get me! Don't let them get me! Oh, don't!"

"Get thee, dearest?" cried Robert, gazing into her upturned features. "You have not enemies enough in this town to take you from me!"

For a few moments after Rosalie had gone the three men stood like fools. They did not think, however, that she could escape; and as they had not thought to look up

the road to see if any one was there, they supposed this movement to be only the result of a frantic idea of running away. But they did not hesitate long. As soon as Elroy and Sir Arthur had fairly recovered their senses, they hastened to the hall, seized their hats, and rushed from the house. They were just in season to see Rosalie and Robert start to walk off.

"They are coming!" cried the frightened girl, clinging to her lover's arm.

"Fear not," he replied. "They shall not take you from me. To-morrow Karmel will be here—and perhaps to-night—and he assured me he can save you."

By this time Elroy had come up near, and the baronet was close behind him.

"Stop!" cried the former, in a gasping tone.

"What would you?" our hero demanded, facing about and placing Rosalie behind him.

"What would I? By the heavens above me, I'll let you know if you don't give up that girl!"

"Oh—not quite so fast, my dear sir," returned the young captain, calmly, but with a very peculiar kind of calmness. "I know you of old. Did you think I would allow you to run at large here without being here myself to overlook you? But, I must say, I did not think operations would be commenced quite so quickly."

"You didn't, eh?" exclaimed Lincoln, coming up at that moment. "You will give me up my daughter, sir!"

"This girl has asked for my protection, sir," said Robert, "and she shall have it. The first man of you that touches her will pass over my body!"

"Are you afraid of him, Elroy?" asked the baronet, as the former stood back.

This served to spur Elroy up, and he made a spring for his cousin; but on the next moment he lay full length upon the ground from a blow upon the breast.

"Back, sir!" the young Rebel shouted, as Lincoln advanced. "I would not touch you. Do not come any nearer, I implore you, sir. You might strike me and welcome, so you did not take this precious charge from me."

"How?—not take my own child? Are you a fool? Do

you suppose you will kidnap my child before my very eyes, sir?"

"Hold, Sir Arthur. When you would place your foot upon a child and crush her down to earth—when you would deliberately break her very heart, and drive her mad with anguish and shame—then you have no more right to control her! You need not—"

Robert stopped here, for Elroy had arisen, and was making another spring—this time with wondrous fury. But it amounted to little. He was but a child in his iron cousin's hands. He was large in frame, but he lacked Robert's muscle; and more still, he lacked Robert's dauntless courage and coolness under trial. Once more he measured his length upon the earth, and then Robert turned again to the baronet.

"Now, sir," he cried, "I am loaded with all I can bear. Do not force me further, for I would not hurt you!"

Sir Arthur gazed a moment upon the sinewy frame of the youth, and then moved back a pace. He had two reasons for doing this. He did not wish to test the Rebel's physical power, nor did he wish to be seen in such a work in the public highway.

"Go—go!" he uttered. "Go both of you. You will hear from me before long! You will hear from me, I say! I'll make you—I'll—I'll—find out who has the power here? Oh! by the Being that made me, I swear that you shall—"

So utterly overcome by absolute madness was the man that he lost his power of articulation. He had grown more and more angry as he proceeded, until he fairly boiled over and drowned his speech; and without another word he turned away. Elroy had arisen, and with a black eye and a limping gait, he proceeded to follow.

"You shall die for this!" he hissed, between his clenched teeth. "You shall know who can be struck with impunity, sir!"

"I know who is a villain, now, Master Elroy!" was Robert's response. "Perhaps you would like for the world to know how you were about to obtain a wife. If you wish to take my life, you had better go home and dream about the gallows first!"

"Come, Elroy," cried the baronet, turning; "we will quickly find those whom he will not dare resist. Let us have no brawl in the public street."

"Will he kill you?" asked Rosalie, eagerly.

"Not while men can be hung for murder," returned Robert, smiling. "He is too great a coward for that. But come; we will go to Andrew Van Ruter's, and there plan for the events to come. I know he will have the civil officers after us; but—Ha! there is Karmel, now—just riding up to Andrew's gate! Oh! there's a new hope for us, I am sure!"

CHAPTER XXV.

A NEW PLOT.

ROBERT PEMBERTON was not the only one who had seen the scout; nor was he the only one who was suddenly influenced thereby. Sir Arthur Lincoln had also seen him, and the effect upon him was as sudden as it was palpable and strange.

"Who is that?" he quickly and startlingly demanded, as his eye first caught the outlines of the scout's form. "That man just riding up to young Van Ruter's house?"

"That?" returned Elroy, turning and looking the direction designated. "Why—that is Karmel—the Rebel scout."

"It is!" uttered the baronet. "Yes—it is! Perdition seize him! Why is *he* here?"

"What harm can he do?" asked Elroy, in surprise. "Cannot our officers take him as quickly as anybody else?"

"Take him?" said Lincoln, half to himself. "Ah—that isn't the thing. Take him?—By heaven, he must be taken! He shall be taken! Come—we'll think as we go."

Thus speaking the baronet turned towards his own house, and strode off with long, quick, and nervous strides. Elroy could see that he was deeply agitated, and that there was a heavy fear upon him. He wondered at it much, for he could not conceive how the Rebel scout could hold any

power for evil over the wealthy baronet. However, he followed on after his host, and ere long they were once more in the apartment they had left with so much assurance. Lincoln took a seat and motioned for his companion to do the same.

"Elroy," he said, seriously and anxiously, "you will ask me no questions, for I can only give you present facts. I can not meet that man."

"Who?—Karmel?"

"Yes, I can not meet him. If he remains by the side of your cousin, all is lost. He must be disposed of."

"And how shall we do it?" queried Elroy. "I am ready for anything. By the powers, you shall not find me backward in bringing to—to—death, if you please—those who have cast upon me such wrong and suffering as I have received through the instrumentality of those two men!"

"I knew you would be ready," responded the host. And then, after a few moments of thought, he added, "We can have them removed very easily. Our British friends will be very much gratified to have the opportunity of placing their hands once more upon those two Rebels. Next to the chiefest of all Rebels—Washington himself—I think they would have Karmel and Robert Pemberton. No two in the Jerseys have done more to cripple the energies of the British; nor do I think there are two others who have done so much. See the damage they have done to the King's cause: They have, to my certain knowledge, betrayed fourteen full companies of good loyalists; they have taken three very valuable store-ships—store-ships upon the cargo of which General Howe had placed nearly all his hopes of comfort for his army;—and they have robbed the King's troops of vast amounts of forage and provisions which were almost in hand."

"Aye," returned the young man; "that is indisputable. If there were only British troops here."

"We must have them here!" said the baronet, in a very quiet tone, but yet one of great depth and meaning.

"Have them here?" repeated Elroy, earnestly.

"Yes. Have them here. There are plenty of them only fifteen miles distant. There are three regiments, to my

certain knowledge, on the western side of Staten Island, and they can come here and return on the same night. They could come to this place and take their prisoners, and return very easily."

"So they could," returned the young man, upon whose mind the baronet's meaning was beginning to open itself.

"But," added Lincoln, "they must be informed of the presence here of the two Rebels."

"Yes—I understand," said Elroy. "I understand you, sir. I will go at once. I will take one of my father's best horses—"

"There is no need of that," interrupted the baronet; "I have as good a horse as there is in the Jerseys. Take him, and be off at once. It is now," he continued, taking out his watch, and increasing in earnestness, "just six o'clock. You can ride to the Kills in two hours, easily; and, if nothing happens to interrupt you, and you find ready means of crossing the Kills to the island, you can reach it before dark."

"Let me have the horse, sir?" cried Elroy, starting up from his chair. "I will be off at once. Oh, I did not think of this before! But it will work. Of course they will come."

"The British?"

"Yes."

"Of course they will; and most happy will they be for the opportunity."

"Then let's have the matter arranged at once. Whom shall I ask for there?"

"Major O'Harra is on the island, and he will understand the whole affair. Seek him the first thing, and tell him I send you. Tell him that the two notorious Rebels who escaped him last winter—who shot down one of his officers, and who have done so much mischief—are here, and that, if he will come, he shall surely have them put into his hands."

"But how many men had he better send?"

"Well—tell him that he had better send a full company—say fifty—at least. There may not be needed more than half a dozen, and there may be needed more. However,

he can judge of that as well as you or I. You can tell him that there are no organized Rebels in this place, so he will have nothing of that kind to fear."

"I understand," replied Elroy. "And now let me have the horse. Oh, come fortune—come luck—come power to stay this cursed plot! If nothing breaks, I'll have them here ere midnight—and then—farewell to Master Robert Pemberton!"

"Aye—and farewell to Karmel the scout!" added the baronet. "Ring the bell! ring the bell!"

Elroy gave the bell-cord a nervous jerk, and Thomas himself answered the summons.

"Where is Sultan?" demanded Sir Arthur, hurriedly.

"In the stable, sir."

"Then saddle and bridle him as quickly as possible, and bring him to the door."

Thomas left the room. And then Lincoln asked his young friend if he wished to go home before he started.

"No," he replied: "I should have to pass Van Ruter's house in doing so, and it might excite suspicion. You can drop over after tea, and inform my father where I am."

"I will. Your plan is a good one. If the two Rebels were to see you riding past, and then back again, on my horse, it might, as you say, excite their suspicion. As for supper, you can get that at the camp."

"Never mind supper. If we can have these two men taken care of I shall be willing to let my suppers take care of themselves for a while."

In a few moments Thomas came with the horse, and Elroy mounted and started off. He reached the Kills without trouble, and was fortunate enough to find a man on hand to ferry him across. A Tory farmer close by, where a number of British soldiers were carousing, took charge of his horse, as the boat was not heavy enough to take both man and beast. He was assured that he would find another animal within a very short distance of the opposite shore.

The soldiers came out as he rode up; and when he had explained his business, as far as there was need, some of them offered to accompany him and conduct him direct to

Major O'Harra. They crossed the narrow sound ; and only a few rods distant they found the place where the soldiers had left their horses, and where a spare one was obtained for Elroy.

There was no danger of meeting any Patriots in that region. A great portion of the soldiers who held Staten Island, and invested the country round about, were Tories ; and they, as we have mentioned before, were far more cruel and avaricious than were the British themselves. They had made excursions against the Patriot farmers wherever they could find them, and some of their deeds of cruelty on these occasions almost exceed belief.

It was not fairly dark when Elroy rode up to the house in which he was told the Major resided. He leaped from his saddle, and knocked at the door ; and the man who answered his summons he at once recognized as the servant of O'Harra.

"Is the major in?" the messenger asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I must see him at once."

"He is engaged now ; but will be at leisure in a very few minutes. You can walk in."

Elroy followed the orderly into a small side room, where he was left while the other went for a light. The light was brought, and he was then informed that he should be notified as soon as the major was disengaged.

"Tell him that Elroy Pemberton wishes to see him on business of the utmost importance."

"Yes, sir."

So saying the servant left the room, and Elroy was alone. He was nervous and uneasy, forgetting that the whole night was before him in which to carry out his diabolical plan. He paced to and fro across the apartment—then took a seat—then up and off again—then down, and a book in his hand bottom upwards. But finally the orderly came with the welcome intelligence that the major was ready to see him.

While Elroy Pemberton was holding his interview with Major O'Harra, there transpired a circumstance without which is worth noticing, not only from its present interest,

but from the result which it was destined to help bring forth.

A few moments after the visitor had been conducted to the apartment of the officer a party of British soldiers approached from the west. They were ten in number, and with them were two prisoners. They passed the house of the major, and kept on around a point of low wood, where they came in sight of a little hamlet consisting of half a dozen houses ; and around were pitched a hundred, or more, large camp-tents, each tent being sufficient in size to accommodate twenty men. Here were encamped quite a body of royal troops.

Near the centre of this hamlet was a two-story building of stone. It had been originally a dwelling-house, built by an old Dutch farmer in the time of the second governor of New Amsterdam. It was like many other structures still standing ; the walls being formed of stones of all sizes, shapes, and colors, and made solid by a kind of clayey cement. The glazed sashes had been removed from the windows, and stout vertical iron bars let into the masonry. This building was now the prison, and towards it the above-mentioned party made their way.

The two prisoners were brothers ; fishermen by occupation, and stern, unyielding patriots. Their names were Mark and Harry Redcliffe ; and they were both stout, powerfully built men ; their faces were very dark from constant exposure, but noble in their form and features. Mark had seen some forty years of life, while his brother was two years younger. They were secured to their saddles by having their feet bound together under their horses' bellies ; and their arms were pinioned behind them, their captors leading the animals.

As they rode up to the prison, the expression which rested upon their faces was almost terrible. It was a deadly expression, full of such hatred and vengeance as no amount of blood can satisfy ! Their legs were unbound, and then they were lifted from their saddles.

"Why not cast off those lashings from their arms?" asked one of the prison guard.

"No, no," returned the leader of the party. "By Saint

George, we've had trouble enough with them two pair of arms a'ready. Why—I'd as lief let a lion loose as to let one o' them cusses free. Ye've no idee what savages they be."

"Where'd ye find 'em?"

"Oh, back a piece in Jersey. These are the chaps as killed two of our men last week."

"Oh-ho! be they? Then we'll see 'em swing!"

"I hope so."

The circumstance thus alluded to happened in this way: A party of eight British soldiers had gone out the week before, partly to hunt some forage. On their way they came to a cottage where lived a widow with three sons and two daughters. These daughters were young and pretty, and the brutes were going to take them off. Mark and Harry Redcliffe, with four others, happened to come up just in season to rescue the maidens; and in doing so they killed two of the soldiers. The girls were saved, but their chief protectors were now in trouble.

"Where's the officer of the guard?" asked the leader of the newly-arrived party.

"I'll go and call him," returned one of the men, and as he spoke he turned away.

In a few moments a lieutenant came out. He came with a strange, unsteady step, and his face wore a grim, idiotic look. The fact was, he had managed to get pretty well drunk.

"Eh?" he gurgled, reeling up and staring about, "got two p-p-pris (hic) z'ners?"

"Yes," answered one of the men. "They are two very dangerous men. We must have them shut up at once."

"At once, *sir*! You'll (hic) say, *sir-r-r* (hic) when you ar-ress *me*! D'yer mind that, ye scape-graces?"

"Certainly, *sir*," responded the man, respectfully, for it would not answer to show insolence to an official uniform, no matter whether a man or a hog were in it. "In my anxiety, *sir*, about the prisoners, *sir*, I forgot to say *sir*, *sir*."

"*Sir, sir*, ye blackguard? Look a (hic) here; you take off one o' them *sirs*, or I'll (hic) take your-r hide off, an' be (hic) blessed to ye!"

This officer was a violent, whimsical brute when he was drunk, and not very kind when sober ; so the men in the present instance dared not cross him. The most they wanted was to get the two prisoners into a safe place.

"Pardon me, sir. I meant no harm, I assure you."

"Oh, you didn't, eh. Well, I rather guess you berrer not ! But why (hic) do't you bring on yer pris'ners ? Where be they ?"

"Here, sir. Shall we carry them up ?"

"Shall we carry them up ?" repeated the lieutenant, with an idiotic leer. "No, sir, *we* won't carry-r 'um up ! I'll carry 'um up !"

The officer gazed upon the prisoners as best he could, and then asked how many there were.

"Two of them, sir," was the answer.

"Then (hic) what ye got them other-r chaps for ?"

"What others, sir ?"

"Why—*them*," said the lieutenant, pointing to the two brothers.

"Those are the two, sir."

The drunken man began to realize that he did not see straight, and finally he bade two of his men to lead the prisoners along. Having given this order he staggered into the prison, and up one flight of stairs.

"Here—stick 'em in here," he cried, stopping before a stout oaken door.

One of the men pushed it open and looked in. The room had been originally a sleeping apartment, and had one window looking to the southward, which was firmly secured by iron bars. In one corner was a heap of common meadow hay, which would not have been there had it been fit for horses to eat. There was nothing of the chair-kind—nothing save the bare walls, floor, ceiling, grated window, and moldy hay.

The soldiers themselves might not have put the two stout Rebels in that place, for there were stronger cells in the building ; but they dared not disobey their superior ; so they led the prisoners in, and then asked the officer if they should go and get irons for them.

"Yes," replied the drunken brute, with an oath, "get the heaviest you can find!"

The irons were brought, and put upon the prisoners; the lieutenant went through the motions of inspecting them, giving the Rebels each a slap upon the face as he did so; and then the soldiers withdrew, and the door was shut and securely bolted.

It was night—early night—but the stars shone, and the warm summer atmosphere seemed to have a sort of phosphorescent light in itself. At any rate, the prisoners could see each other as they sat upon the floor, and each saw that the other was stern and sad.

"Mark," spoke the younger brother, in a hoarse whisper, "who will bury our father?"

"Bury him" returned Mark, trembling violently. "Oh, God! what a time is this! Our father dead!—killed by British hirelings!" As he spoke his teeth were ground together with a harsh sound, and his heavy irons clanked again.

"They were Tories who killed our father," said Harry. "Men who were born upon our own soil!"

"I know it," responded Mark. "They were Tories! Oh, Heaven, grant us vengeance! Come here, Harry. Come and sit by my side. We must not talk too loud."

The younger brother started to shuffle across the room, but when he had come near the center a sudden exclamation dropped from his lips, and he stopped.

"What is it?" asked Mark.

"It is an iron ring!" answered the other. "It belongs to a trap-door—Ha! It is loose!—I can open it! But it is all dark below."

"Shut it, quick!" whispered Mark. "We may make use of it!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

A TRAP.

WHEN Robert and Rosalie reached Van Ruter's house they found Karmel just entering by the back way, he having come from the stable. Our hero related to him what had happened; and Rosalie had also given some explanation.

"Fear not," replied the scout. "They shall not harm you. Trust all to me."

There is always something in the assurance of one whom we respect, that allays fear. No matter how imminent the peril, let an honorable man give positive assurance that he can avert it, and our alarm gives place to a sense of security. Both Robert and Rosalie knew that Karmel would not have given that promise unless he had power to make it good, so they rested their hopes with him, and tried to be happy. They were happy, but not wholly without apprehension.

Andrew and Kate did all in their power to make their guests comfortable; and having waited nearly an hour to see if Lincoln and Elroy would come with official help, as they had expected would be done, they sat down to supper.

Time passed on, but no one appeared to claim the maiden.

"Can it be that they mean to give it up?" queried Robert.

"Do you think Sir Arthur saw me?" asked Karmel.

"He must, I think," Robert said.

"Then he may be waiting in the hope that I may go away. But he will find himself mistaken. I shall see him before I go—you may be sure of that."

"And you are sure all will be safe?" urged Rosalie, earnestly.

"As safe as you could possibly wish, my dear," the old man returned.

The maiden was sitting close by the scout, and as he thus spoke she rested her head upon his shoulder, and one

of his arms found its way about her neck. She loved that old man—she could not help it. He was so kind and good ; and then he seemed to be the rock of her safety. She felt a perfect confidence in him so far as her reason could influence her ; and if she had a misgiving it was the result of emotions over which she had no control.

It was ten o'clock when Robert proposed that they should retire. He and Karmel had had but little sleep of late, and they were much fatigued ; and the others were by no means anxious to remain up longer. So Kate led Rosalie away, while her brother took charge of Robert and Karmel, who were to occupy one room.

It was not far from midnight when Andrew Van Ruter heard some one knock at the outer door. He had been awake some moments, and had heard the clock strike twelve. He rose and passed out into the hall, at the end of which was a window directly overlooking the front door. He raised the sash and looked out, and saw a single man upon the steps.

"Who's there?" the gunsmith demanded.

"It's a friend," returned the visitor. "I wish to see Robert Pemberton, and an old Patriot scout, called Karmel."

"What do you want of them?"

"I want to see them for their own good. They are in danger ; and I have ridden fifteen miles to-night to tell them of it. Let me see them at once."

"Who shall I tell them wishes to see them?"

"They may not know me by name—and yet they may. My name is Van Vorhees. I belong in Amboy."

With this Andrew left the window and went to the room in which he had left his two male guests. He found Robert sitting up in his bed. He could not see his face in the dark, but from the position he judged that the young captain was in a state of intense excitement.

"Who's that?" Robert cried, quickly, and with startling energy.

"It's only Andrew."

"Andrew? Is it you?" the youth faintly uttered, in a sinking tone. "Oh! I am glad. How long have you been here?"

"I have just come. But what is the matter, Robert? Have you heard anything?"

"Heard anything?" returned our hero, spasmodically. "Oh, my soul, Andrew, such a dream as I have had! All the tortures you ever imagined—all you ever read of—could be as nothing compared with the utter horrors of this night phantom that has so frightened me. I acknowledge I have been frightened."

"But what was it?"

"I could not tell it as it came to me. I would not if I could! All the horrors of the fabled Tartarus are as nothing in comparison! But tell me—did I awake you? Did I cry out?"

"No. I am forgetting there is a man at the door who wishes to see you."

"Ha! At the door? Is it so?"

"Yes. I heard him knocking, and I went to the window. He is from Amboy, and his name is Van Vorhees."

"So said my dream! There was a man at the door!—he wished to see me!—I went, and I saw him; but instead of a man 'twas a demon of such horrid front that I sank powerless before him! He wished to see *me*. But when I was helpless he found another! He found Rosalie!—and when he had her in his power he—Oh, Andrew, I cannot tell it!"

At this juncture Karmel awoke. He started up when he saw that Robert was conversing with some one else, and as soon as he recognized Andrew, he asked what had happened.

"There is a man at the door who wishes to see you and Robert," the young host answered. "He says you are in danger; and he has ridden fifteen miles to-night to warn you."

"Ah! Then we must see him," cried Karmel, leaping from the bed. "There may be some piece of villainy cooking up against us of which we have no idea. Who is the man?"

"He says his name is Van Vorhees; and, furthermore, that he came from Amboy."

"Oh, I know a family of that name there; and they are good Patriots, too. Let's go, Robert."

As the scout thus spoke he leaped from the bed, and began to feel around for his clothing.

"Let's have a light, Andrew," he added, as he attempted to draw on his hunting-shirt in place of breeches.

The host left the room at once, and as soon as he was gone Robert spoke. His voice was tremulous still, and his agitation was far from being quelled.

"Karmel—don't laugh at me—but I've had the most terrible dream it was ever my lot to experience. I dreamed first that a man called to see us—just as this one has done ; and I went down. I found him a demon—of such horrible form and feature that my blood seemed to curdle, and my heart to cease its beating. With a power superhuman he deprived me of physical strength, and then left me, to seize upon Rosalie ! He found her—he brought her forth—and then a score of other demons like himself made their appearance ; and their dreadful work began. I cannot tell you more. Oh, my tongue cannot speak it !"

"The scout did not, as many would have done, laugh at his companion. He was sober and thoughtful ; and when he spoke his voice plainly indicated that his friend's story had affected him.

"I know how much things can affect the mind," he said, "for I have felt their power. While the reason sleeps these horrid phantoms may so absolutely gain control of the senses as to hold them in torture for some time, yet we have nothing to fear from one man."

"*Fear?*" repeated Robert, quickly. "You do not imagine that the thought has come to me in connection with myself ? Oh, no. It is for another I fear—for another my anxiety holds me back. Oh, how the fond love of a human heart can turn a brave man to a seeming coward !"

"Aye," said the scout, "it sometimes operates so ; but oftener it makes a tremulous heart grow strong. Man will often dare for love what he would never dare for self. But I think we will go and—"

He was cut short by the entrance of Andrew, who came in with a lamp in his hand. Both he and Karmel were startled by the pale, haggard look upon Robert's face ; but the host was anxious upon another point.

"That man is uneasy," he said. "He is knocking away there, and says he shall go if you do not come soon."

"You say he is alone?" queried Karmel.

"I can see no one else. I have looked all around."

"Well—we'll go down," the old man said. "It may be an honest man, come for an honest purpose. You hold on, Robert, I'll go."

"No! no!" cried our hero, leaping from his bed. "Hold on until I get dressed."

"No—I'll run down and see who it is."

"Have you got your pistols?"

"No. I forgot them."

"Then take them; for they can be of no harm, and may be of much real benefit."

Karmel took his pistols, and having placed them in his belt he was about to start again, when Robert hailed him once more.

"Just one minute, Karmel, and I'll be ready to go with you. You see I have but little more to do."

The scout saw that his companion was nearly dressed, so he concluded to wait for him.

This movement served to lift our hero's mind up from the slough into which it had sunk, and if he still had fear, it was far from being as terrible as before, or, at least, it was not so enervating.

In a few moments the young man was ready, and the two left the room. Karmel suggested that they had better go to the window first; so thither they went. The sash was raised, and as the old man put his head out he saw a man standing upon the door-stone.

"Hallo! Who are you?"

"Eh?" uttered the man, looking up. "I should think I'd been here long enough for some of ye to know who I am. I'm Nanny Van Vorhees; and I'm from Amboy; and I've got information that'll be of service to Karmel and Robert Pemberton."

"What is your information," the scout asked.

"Where are the two men I wish to see?"

"They are here. I am Karmel, and Robert Pemberton is close by. Now what would you tell us?"

"Nothing!" answered the stranger, in seeming disappointment. "The man, or men, who will not trust me, may whistle for their information. If you find yourselves in trouble ere long, you won't blame me."

"Hallo!—hold on!" cried Karmel, as the fellow turned away. "We'll be with you in a moment."

The man stopped, and the two Rebels started to go down.

"Hark!" whispered Robert, as they reached the hall. "What was that noise?"

"I heard nothing," returned the other.

They listened a moment, but hearing nothing they kept on. The door was unbolted and unlatched; but no sooner was it started back than some one from without pushed it violently open, and on the next moment the hall was full of armed men! Robert held a pistol in his hand; but ere he could use it he was seized from behind and thrown upon the floor. Half a dozen small lanterns had suddenly flashed upon the scene; so our Rebel friends were easily discovered.

Karmel had been knocked over backwards by the first onset, and before he could gain his feet he was set upon by four stout men and secured. It was while he was being bound that Robert was pulled over; and ere many moments had elapsed he also was securely bound.

At this juncture Andrew Van Ruter rushed into the hall. But what could he do? He saw a score of British soldiers, all armed, and even his two friends beyond the power of helping him or themselves.

"Who are you?" cried one of the soldiers, as the young host made his appearance.

"Who? I am the owner of this house; and these men were my guests. What means this behavior?"

"Shall we take him along?" asked a corporal, pointing to Andrew as he spoke.

"No," returned one who wore a sergeant's uniform. "We have all we were ordered to take; and let's be off with 'em."

It was a moment of strange anguish to Andrew. He felt that his two friends had in a measure sought the pro-

tection of his roof ; and now he must see them dragged away, before his very face, and he not able to offer the least resistance. At first his impulse had been a pugnacious one ; but he thought of Kate and Rosalie—that they would be left defenceless if he were taken away—and he resolved to keep his hands to himself. But it was a severe struggle. He saw his friends carried away ; and as they were dragged from his sight a deep sob burst from his bosom.

Karmel and Robert were led around to the end of the house, where they saw more soldiers just leading up the horses from behind the barn.

“Oh, here you are,” cried the voice which had sounded from the door-stone while Karmel was looking from the window ; “here you are,” the fellow repeated, gazing first into the face of the scout, and then into the other. “I told ye ye was in danger. I knew ye was ; and ye sees I spoke truly.”

The prisoners could make no reply to this. They had no desire to bandy words which could be of no use ; and when the fellow found that they took no notice of him he turned away. He was the only one not dressed in uniform. His business had been such that his uniform would surely have given the alarm ; so he had appeared in a common citizen's garb. He seemed to feel quite funny over the success of his plot, and tried hard to get some retort from the prisoners. And at length he got it. He came near enough for Robert to reach him with his foot, and with one powerful kick the youth sent him at full length upon the ground. The fellow started up and came at a furious pace against our hero, when another well-directed kick landed him a second time upon the greensward. He would now have run the prisoners through with a sword which he had caught from a companion, had not some of the others held him back. They laughed at him, and told him he had commenced the quarrel. He turned away with an oath, and contented himself with the idea that he should see the Rebel swing.

Two horses were brought from the little barn for the prisoners, one of which proved to be Andrew's. The other

was Karmel's. Robert said nothing of the mistake, however, as his own horse was well worn down, but still far superior in point of worth to the one they had brought out. If he never returned, Andrew would have made an excellent exchange.

As quickly as possible the Rebels were mounted—their ankles lashed beneath their horses' bellies, and the order was given for starting. There were two score of the soldiers in all; and half of them rode on ahead, while the remainder rode behind the prisoners.

Just as they started, or rather as they gained the road, Robert heard a piercing shriek, behind him. He turned his head, and could just see a white dress fluttering in the wind upon the door-stone! With a mighty effort he strained the cords that bound him, but without effect; and a moment's reflection told him that he could do nothing. He heard that wild, agonizing cry still piercing through the air; but a few more bounds carried him beyond the scene, and with a low, deep groan his muscles all relaxed, and his heart sank within him like a lump of lead!

"Ha!" whispered Karmel, as they came opposite the dwelling of Sir Author Lincoln. "Look there!"

Robert looked, and he saw two human forms at the door.

"The baronet and Elroy!" he said.

"Yes," returned the scout in a meaning tone; "they are looking to see how their plan is working."

"Hallo!" cried one of the soldiers. "None of your talking, there! Keep your tongues still!"

The Rebels said no more; but their thoughts were their own; though it cannot be supposed that such thoughts as would be likely to result from their then present position would have been conducive to much joy. They knew the order that had been promulgated concerning them, and they had no doubt that it would be promptly carried into execution. They knew that even a lieutenant, in command of a station, could have them hung; and they furthermore knew that there was not a lieutenant, nor any other officer in the British army, but that would hang them with a good relish!

Surely that midnight ride could not have been a joyful one!

CHAPTER XXVII.

A STARTLING STORY—AN INTERRUPTION.

It was just daylight when the party who conducted the two Rebel prisoners reached the lower Kills. The ferryman was upon the other side; but the discharge of three muskets started him up, and he soon came over with his boat. The horses were left to be taken over when more help should come, and they could get the larger boat across.

When they reached the stone prison the sun was well up, and the men were all moving in the camp—all save the lieutenant who had the first guard of the night before. He was still asleep, with a beautiful headache in store.

Karmel and Robert were led into the guard-room, which was the northern room upon the front side, where there were several soldiers and a lieutenant.

"Will you have these men shut up, or will you string 'em up at once?" asked the leader of the party who had captured the two Rebels. He spoke with about the same emotion that might have been manifested by a cook when asking if he should kill a couple of chickens.

"We'll have to shut them up at present," said the officer of the guard. "Major O'Harra must see them, and he won't be here before night, perhaps not until late. He has gone over to the other camp. However, they'll swing in the morning, if not to-night. Not a very pleasing thought, is it?"

This last remark was directed to the prisoners, and was accompanied by a sort of triumphant smile. But they made no reply. The thought that they were to have a day and night to themselves gave them hope, and they were anxious to keep it to themselves.

"Let's have a little examination here," the officer said, before the prisoners were led away. "Have you got any arms concealed about you?" he added, approaching Karmel.

"Only such as God gave me ; and they are useless now," the scout replied.

"Concealed weapons, I said, thick-head !"

"I have none, sir."

The officer ran his hands over the old man's clothing, and then felt in his pockets, where he found four dollars in silver and five golden guineas.

"You won't have any farther need of these things," he said, as he slipped them into his own pocket. "And now," he added, turning to the younger prisoner, "let's see what you've got."

He first ran his hand over the clothing to see that no weapons were concealed beneath, and then took an excursion into the pockets. In one of them he found a purse, and in the purse were three guineas, beside some silver—two crown pieces, a half-crown and several shillings.

"You'll feel easier to be rid of this stuff," the lieutenant said with a smile. "Half the ill-luck in this world can be traced to just such property."

"Take them away, and put them into the middle cell. I'll come and see that all is secure."

The prisoners were led from the guard-room out into the hall, and when they stopped it was before a room upon the same floor, not far distant from the one they had just left, but on the opposite side. This door was thrown open, and the Rebels led in. They instinctively cast their eyes about to see what the room contained ; but they saw nothing save a bundle of moldy hay in one corner—that was all.

The door was shut and bolted, and the two men left alone. It was quite dark in there—there being no window, and all the light that could come in was in a little hole over the doorway, which seemed to have been made for ventilation. The place had evidently been built or partitioned off for a dark store-room, as it was too small for a sleeping-room, and not light enough for any other purpose. The floor was of smooth stone, and the four walls seemed to be the same.

It was some time after the prisoners were thus left alone before either of them spoke. Each seemed to have thoughts which he would not force upon the other, though they well

knew that their thoughts must run in very near the same channel. Robert was the first to speak.

"Ah, Karmel, I had one hope, when I found that we were likely to have a night to ourselves, which has vanished now. You have your little saw, haven't you?"

"Yes. It's safe in my neck-handkerchief."

"So is mine. But we cannot use them. When I saw this prison, and noticed the barred windows, I supposed we might have a chance to try our hand at some of the bars if we had time for it. But fate is against us."

"It is," returned the scout, sadly. "I fear that Arthur Lincoln has circumvented us. It is hard to think that such villainy shall triumph; but so it is likely to prove. They have fairly trapped us."

"And have you imagined how 'twas done?" asked Robert.

"Have you?" said Karmel.

"Yes," returned Robert. "I think Elroy must have ridden off to this place and sent those soldiers after us."

"You are right. It must have been so. When Sir Arthur threatened to have civil officers after you—if he did make that threat—"

"I heard him say to Elroy that they would find civil officers to do the work. And he told me the same. He said he'd soon bring those whom I would not dare to resist."

"That makes it plain to me," returned the scout. "He meant to have employed the civil officers to take his child; but when he saw me he dared not do it. He knew that soldiers could come to New Brunswick in the night and take us if it could be done quietly. I almost think we were blind not to guard against such a trap. A British army only fifteen or twenty miles distant, with no Patriot forces between, and our deadly enemies at both points. We should have thought of it—we should have thought of it."

"It's too late to help it now," responded the youth. "I know we might have thought of it without exercising any great amount of wit, for the thing would have been plain had we turned our attention to it."

"Aye," said Karmel, "'tis too late now; and we may have to give up the race. I can see no hope of escape

from here. We can take off our irons, I know, but what can that avail us? Even allowing that we could overcome our attendant, we could not get clear of the building. And yet, we are far from being dead men."

"And while life remains, there is room for hope," added Robert. "If we are left here to-night, and not taken out until to-morrow, we may so fix our irons that we can shake them off at will; and then, when we are led out, we may break away, and—"

"Be shot instead of being hanged," interposed the old man.

"You are right. A rope or a bullet! Alas! poor Rosalie!"

The mention of that name caused them both the most painful emotions; and Robert thought of his prophetic dream.

The day wore slowly away, but no one came to look in upon the Rebels. They were hungry, but not painfully so. It was thirst that began to oppress them. The day was a warm and sultry one; and within that cell the air was fairly hot and rarefied. Had it not been for the little hole over the door, through which the exhausted air partially escaped, they could not have lived there. At noon they were oppressed by a raging thirst; but when the hours passed on and no help came, the thirst became an agony, and was growing more and more intense at every moment.

"*Water! Water! Water!*" yelled the scout, at the top of his voice.

"*Water! Water! Water!*" echoed Robert.

A loud laugh was heard in the distance, and the old scout gnashed his teeth in rage.

"Inhuman monsters," he hissed between his teeth. "Oh, God grant that I may be among you once more with my arms free!"

"*Water! Water! Water!*"

The thirst was terrible. The old man's throat seemed parched and his tongue on fire. Phantoms of pewter flagons dwelt in his mind; he imagined he could see such vessels before him, with the cold sweat standing upon them, and hear the rattling of the ice within, as the beverage was

agitated ! He thought of such scenes until he fairly howled with agony !

“ Oh, just Heaven ! will they let us die with thirst ? ”

“ I cannot live through the night ! ” said Robert. “ I am burning up ! This atmosphere absorbs every particle of moisture from us. My skin is like a hot, dry husk ! Will they not have mercy ? *Water ! Water ! Oh Water !* ”

The afternoon was near its close when the door of the cell was opened, and two men entered. One of them bore a lantern, and the other a common wooden pail.

“ There, ” said the latter, as he set the vessel down, “ now drink your fill. You may have water, but you won’t need anything to eat. Major O’Harra has just returned, and he will have you both hung in the morning. He heard your yells for water as he stopped at the guard-room, and ordered us to bring some in. I hope ye’ll keep quiet now ; but if you don’t I think we’ll find a way to make you do it. ”

With this gentle admonition the men went out, leaving the prisoners to get at the water as best they could. But they were not long in finding a way to do that. They were bound in the usual way of complete ironing : shackles upon the wrists and ankles, and then a stout chain, two feet long, connecting them, so that a man of ordinary height could not stand erect.

The prisoners both sat down, facing each other ; and then Robert lifted the pail to Carmel’s lips. Oh, how quickly all other thoughts vanished as the cool nectar rolled over his parched tongue ! All fear was gone—death lost its terror—and new life seemed to spring forth from the grateful beverage.

Karmel drank slowly and carefully ; and then, in turn, raised the vessel to the lips of his companion. For a wonder the water was pure and cold, having just been drawn from a deep well, and the old man warned our hero against giving way too much to his thirst.

Ere long they felt strong again. Karmel had drunk several times, sipping only a little at a time, and his companion had done the same. After this they moved the pail into one corner, where it could not be tipped over, and then resumed their sitting posture.

It was now a little past eight o'clock, as they knew from having heard the call of the guard ; and in their cell it was as dark as Erebus. They conversed some, but only at intervals, and then not long at a time. A silence of some minutes had lasted, and the two friends seemed to be listening to each other's breathing, when Robert said, in a low, earnest tone :

"Karmel, you, of course, know that we cannot hope to live much longer."

"Yes," returned the old man, in a tone which seemed to imply that he knew what was coming.

"Then," resumed the youth, "why not reveal to me your true character. Let me at least have that satisfaction before I die."

Karmel did not answer at once. His manner of breathing seemed to indicate that he was pondering upon the question thus raised in his mind. Finally he said, speaking as one who has just broken from an old resolution :

"Well—I know not why I should refuse to tell you the story. All things are possible with God ; and it is not absolutely impossible that you may escape while I am left to die."

"Do you think I would go and leave you here?" cried Robert, warmly.

"Yes," answered Karmel, in a tone of calm, gentle reproof. "I think if they should decide that only one of us must die—and that the other might go free—you would go. If you would not, then you would act only a foolhardy part. Yet I respect and appreciate the feeling with which you spoke."

"I may have spoken hastily," responded Robert ; "and yet I adhere to what I then meant. I meant that I could not accept of an escape which would leave you unaided. That is what I meant ; and to that I think I should adhere."

"Well—well—I won't argue that point. I think I'll tell you my story."

The old man hesitated a few moments, and finally he resumed :

"Of course you know I was born in England."

"I supposed so," returned Robert.

"Yes—I was born in the mother country. My parents were wealthy—very wealthy—and I received a good education. My father's nearest neighbor, with whom he could associate on terms of social equality, was Lord John Lincoln. Lord John had but two children, both sons, the eldest of which was in India, and the other at home. That youngest son was Arthur—now Sir Arthur Lincoln! He was older than I in years; but in ability, either mental or physical, I was his equal; so we were mates in our studies and at play. He was never able to win my confidence or esteem. There was always something in his manner that I did not like. I could not tell what it was; and yet 'twas very palpable to me.

"There are cases in which a like feeling may arise in any bosom. We may meet a man; become intimate and friendly with him; and yet there may be an atmosphere of repulsiveness about him which we cannot explain. We may dislike him exceedingly, and yet, when asked why we hold such feelings, we can no more tell than we can tell the color of the inhabitants of the planets. It was thus I felt towards Arthur Lincoln. I played with him in childhood; and I associated with him in early youth; but I could not like him. In fact, as we grew older, I disliked him more and more. There was something repulsive about him, and to save my soul, I could not have trusted him with my confidence.

"Time sped on, and his father died. On the very day of the funeral news came from India that his elder and only brother was dead. That evening—after the funeral solemnities had all passed—I called upon Arthur. I thought he would be sad and downcast, being thus called upon to mourn the loss of a father and a brother at the same time, and I hoped I might be able to comfort him. When I entered I found him at full length upon a sofa and alone. When he saw who it was he leaped up and caught my hand.

"'Walter, my boy!' he cried, giving me a grip that fairly pained me—you thus learn a part of my real name—'Walter, my boy, give me joy! A father and brother kicked off by the same puff! All that stood between me

and the great wealth of our house is thus knocked over ! Hi ! won't we have some high old times ?'

"And then, while I was speechless with utter astoundment, he slapped me upon the back and added in a tone of most horrid meaning :

"Walt, just speak the word, and I'll give you a sure recipe for *putting YOUR governor under the sod too !*'

"Merciful heaven ! In an instant I knew that he had murdered his father ! My own father had been called in only a month before to draw up Lord John's will ! By that instrument the vast property was to be equally divided, at his death, between his two sons. Arthur was of age—he had been so almost a year—and he wanted more money. He had drawn upon his father until the purse was closed to him. He had contracted gambling debts, and they must be paid, or he must suffer dishonor at his club. Those debts amounted to some thousands of pounds. How was he to pay them ? His father had, about a month before—yes—I recollect—it was immediately after the will was made—placed him upon an allowance of four thousand pounds a year. But that would not answer. He must have more—and that, too, immediately. So he murdered his noble old father !"

The scout stopped here, as though his feelings had in a measure overcome him ; and Robert asked, with a shudder :

"But are you sure he did that murder ?"

"I'll tell you how much I know," Karmel answered. "A few days after the making of the will—and, mind you, Arthur knew all about the document and its purport—a few days after that he and I went to London, and while there he went to an old second-hand book-store, and bought a work on alchemy, which contained full and thorough recipes for different kinds of poison. I remember the book well. It was a German publication, and gave all the information that a systematic poisoner could wish. This he studied in our room at the metropolis ; and before we left he went to a druggist's and purchased a number of drugs, minerals, and liquid preparations. Now, take this in connection with the remark he made to me on the evening to which I have alluded, and there is little room left for doubt.

And further still : The doctors were never able to decide the precise character of the disease of which the old man died. They knew there was inflammation of the stomach, and of the internal canals ; but the peculiar symptoms baffled their skill. I was the only one who knew these things ; and as I kept them to myself Arthur was safe from the law.

" But from that moment I avoided him. I could not help it. He was like a pest—a plague-spot—a demon—to me, and I absolutely feared him. This led him to distrust me ; and finally to fear me. Oh, had he poisoned me I should have thanked him, could I have had the power of doing so, and at the same time known what was in his heart ! Ah ! many a time since that hour, had I wished his vengeance had fallen upon me through the same fatal compound that killed his father. But it was not to be."

Again, the scout stopped—this time wholly overcome. But ere long he resumed :

" As I said ; or, rather, as I have intimated, Arthur Lincoln knew that I held the knowledge of his dark crime ; and when he found that I shunned him he became afraid of me. For some time he kept his feelings to himself ; but at length—Hark ! what sound was that ?"

" It was something overhead," said Robert.

" Has some one been listening ?"

" Who should do so ? No, It is—But see ! Look up there ! —sh ! Say not a word. There's somebody looking down upon us !"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROKEN BARS, AND A BROKEN HEAD.

KARMEL gazed up in the direction pointed out by his companion, and he could distinguish a break in the ceiling, where a narrow line of dim light was visible. It seemed as though a trap-door were being opened. But the mystery was soon solved. A voice from above spoke, in a whisper, but yet plain to those below :

"Who are you, down there?"

"Prisoners," returned Robert.

"What kind of prisoners?"

The youth hesitated a moment, for this was something unexpected. But he quickly saw that to tell the truth plainly could no harm, and that to prevaricate could do no good. So he said :

"We are Rebels of the deepest dye!"

"Good," uttered the man above, who spoke with a gruff voice, but frankly and openly. It was one of those kind of voices which could not possibly find room in a small heart. "We are of the same stripe up here. We heard ye callin' for water, so we knew ye must be prisoners. Mayhap ye've heard of Mark Redcliffe? And maybe ye've heard of his brother Harry? We're both here. Now, who may you two be?"

"Mark and Harry?" cried Robert, leaping to his feet. They were his own men. They had been with him for years. They were with him when he took the British brig. "Don't you know my voice?" he asked.

"It's got a familiar ring to it; but it sounds odd down in that place."

"Well—it is Robert Pemberton."

"Robert—Captain Pemberton! You don't—But 'tis! I know ye now! By the holy piper, Captain, I'd be the happiest man alive to have met ye in any other place. But who's with you?"

"Karmel."

"Jerusalem!—Karmel? And have the villains got the two best men in the Jerseys in their power?"

"Is there a window to your room?" Robert asked.

"Yes. But it's got iron bars to it, that no mortal man can break."

"Karmel," gasped our hero, turning towards the spot where he supposed the old man stood, for the opening of the trap-door had not thrown light enough into the dungeon to enable them to distinguish objects, "may there not be a means of escape here? We can cut those bars; and cut off our irons, too!"

"Of course there's means," the scout returned. "If

they can lift us up there we may soon find the way into fresh air !”

“Mark,” said the youth, addressing his friend above, “if we can contrive to get up there we can very soon cut off anything in the shape of iron.”

“Ye can?”

“Yes. We are prepared for such work. We have no windows here at all.”

“We could get ye up easy enough if we had our irons off.”

“Hold on a few moments. We’ll see what can be done. Here, Karmel; come and take off my neck-tie.”

Robert kneeled down as he spoke, and the scout very easily cast off the tie. In the tie were the blade and bow of a fine saw. The bow was made in a semi-circular form, on purpose to conceal in that manner; while the blade was of course flexible enough to be brought into the same shape.

When the two Rebels had escaped from the prison in New Brunswick they knew they should be liable to be imprisoned again; and they kept the little saws which Rosalie had brought to them. Subsequently Andrew Van Ruter made new bows, or frames, for them, so that they could be concealed in the neck-cloth—almost the last place in which a man would think of looking for a saw! Thus the Rebels now had their useful tools at hand.

Robert was but a few moments in fixing the blade into the frame; and having tightened it by means of a little thumbscrew, he proceeded to cut the connecting bolt of Karmel’s hand-irons. When this was done, he cut away his companion’s feet-irons; and then had his own cut off in turn. After this he spoke to Mark:

“Sit down upon the edge of the hole and let your feet hang down here,” he said. “Perhaps I can reach them.”

Mark did so, and Robert found that he could reach the feet easily. Without much trouble he felt out the bolt, and placed his saw upon it; and in a few moments the bar was cut in twain.”

“Now, remove those irons without noise,” said Robert; “and then try to reach me your hands.”

This was easily done. Mark took off the irons from his feet, and as the connection was made by passing the bar through a link of the connecting chain, of course the irons were free as soon as the bolt was pulled out. He then lay down upon his belly and let his hands hang through the trap. Robert reached them easily, and the irons were removed without trouble.

Mark was now free, and he began to plan for the raising of his friends below.

"My old frock is strong enough," he said. "I can't reach with my hands in any position where I could lift; but if ye'll just take my frock, I reckon I can raise ye."

As he spoke he pulled the garment off; and having rolled it up properly, he let it down. Robert seized it; and then, by main strength, Mark Redcliffe hauled him up. The fisherman was a powerful fellow, and the weight was but slight upon his stout arms. In the same way the scout was lifted up, and then the trap-door was shut.

A few moments were spent in glad greetings—and they were glad ones—for even the two brothers, in view of the hope before them, and the meeting with their beloved and honored young captain, forgot the deep grief that had oppressed them. They had not forgotten their good old father; but the hope of vengeance was a great relief. A few moments were spent in greetings, and then they turned their attention to work.

"We must get away as soon as possible," said Harry Redcliffe. "Oh, I only ask to be once more free, with a good weapon in my hands! Our father shall be avenged!"

"Your father?" questioned Robert. "What of him?"

"Dead!—killed!" groaned Mark. "Shot down before our eyes!"

"But how happened it?"

"It was thus: A party of Tories had come out our way—on a foraging expedition, I expect—and they passed our cottage. Harry and I happened to be in, and they saw us, and knew us. Just a week before, Harry and I, with four others, were over in Amboy, and as we came home we passed widow Noble's house. When we reached it we found eight British soldiers there, just making ready to

carry off the old lady's two daughters. We killed two of the villains and drove the rest away ; and then sent the family further inland. Well, there happened to be some of them chaps that we drove off in the gang that came along yesterday ; and, as I said before, they knew us, and meant to take us. We had no arms ; we were cut off from the house ; and even before we could get clubs the Tories were upon us. Our old father came out with a gun, and the moment they saw him they shot him ! He fell with five Tory bullets in his body ! What d'ye think of that ? ”

“ It's hard,” said Robert, sadly.

“ It's their nature ! ” added Karmel, indignantly.

“ And it's our nature to revenge such a deed ! ” pronounced Mark, deeply and solemnly. “ God knows we ain't neither of us evil-disposed ; but when we see such men turning against their country, and murdering all they can lay their hands on to, it makes me feel as though I could help put 'em out o' the way with a good relish. And we will, too ! ”

“ Hark ! ” said Harry, just as his brother ceased speaking. “ There goes the call ! It's just eleven o'clock. We must be off before twelve, or they'll find us in a fuss.”

“ We'll make quick work of it,” returned the scout. “ But first,—where are the sentries posted ? Ain't there one under the window ? ”

“ There's one passes under the window once in a while,” returned Mark ; “ but he don't come regularly. Yet he must be posted somewhere close by.”

“ Never mind. We can hear him when he comes. And now let's try these bars.”

The irons had been removed from Harry's feet and hands when the four first came together, so all that remained, before the way was opened, was to cut off the bars. Of these bars there were four—just enough to supply them with arms. And they would make weapons of no mean kind. They were round, and fully an inch in diameter.

The first one had to be cut diagonally, as there was not room to work the saw transversely. But the keen, sharp, diamond-like teeth took hold upon the iron freely, and ere long the two outer bars were out. The sentinel passed twice

during the operation, and as he went back the second time Robert looked down to see where he went. He saw him turn the corner and go around in front of the building, where he disappeared, probably meeting there the sentinel who guarded the other end of the prison.

The other two bars were removed, and then a consultation was held. Several ideas were advanced ; but Robert hit the right one :

"I have it," he said, after a short season of reflection. "When that sentinel passes the call he always stands in front of the prison. The next time the call is passed I will slip quietly down and conceal myself behind the big tree close by ; then, when the sentinel has come out here and turned to go back I will just rap him upon the head. With him out of the way the rest is easy. Mark's frock made fast by one corner to the stump of one of the bars will be long enough to let us down."

This was looked upon as the best plan yet presented, and it was finally adopted.

It was now not far from half-past eleven—the time at which the next call would be passed—and as soon as Mark had made one corner of his frock fast to the iron stump, the prisoners turned their attention to each other's accounts of adventure.

Mark and Harry had seen much of the doings of the Tories ; and when Karmel and Robert wondered why they were not with the army, they seemed uneasy.

"I don't mean to blame you, nor even to find fault," said the old scout ; "but yet you would do much service with the army."

"Why are *you* not with the army ?" asked Mark.

"Ah—you know I have other business. You know that Robert Pemberton and myself are already in business."

"So are we," said Harry. "What's the use ? You are two honorable men, and of course we may trust you. I can't bear to leave you, and have you think we are shirking our duty."

"I don't think that," quickly answered Karmel.

"And yet you think we ought to be in the service ?"

"Why, I thought you might be helping what you could ; and perhaps you are."

"Why not tell them, Mark ? You know we may trust them."

"Yes, tell them," said the elder brother.

"You will keep our secret ?" resumed Harry, turning to Karmel and Robert.

"Of course we will."

"Well—we *are* in the service—in the service of Washington himself. You understand now."

"Yes. Forgive me !" cried the scout, seizing the speaker's hand. "Your business is a dangerous one, but I know you have the courage to do it. I did not know when I first spoke but that the fear of your father's safety had kept you at home."

"No. We could have put him in a place of safety at any time.—He's safe now—God rest his soul !—We are set here to watch these villainous Tories. We have delivered over two hundred of them into Patriot hands within a month. Those chaps that took us suppose we are Rebels ; but they don't dream they have two—"

"Two what ?" asked Robert, as Harry hesitated.

"Well—I might as well out with it—"

"Only be more careful next time," interposed Mark, with a light laugh.

"I meant that the British didn't know when they took us that they'd got the two *Indians* who have joined their Tory bands. That's the way we've done it. We have disguises complete. Our own father didn't know us when we first put them on. We went into the house, and for half an hour he talked with us, supposing we were two real red-skins. We did that so as to know that our disguises were com—Ha ! There goes the call !"

Robert leaped to the window, with one of the iron bars in his hand, and sprang upon the sill. The sentinel upon the opposite side started the call, and as soon as his "*All's well*" had been given to the ears of the listeners, the other sentinel took it up. It was at that moment that our hero was to start. With a nimble movement he slid down by

the old frock, and safely dropped to the ground, and then sprang behind a large elm that grew close at hand.

In a few minutes the sentinel came moping along from his cosy leaning-place in front. He had been on an hour and a half, and he was tired. From ten till midnight is with most men the sleepest watch of all ; and this man seemed to find it so ; for he would walk a few paces, with his head down, and then, with a sort of lurch, start to an upright posture ; showing plainly that he was nodding. When about six feet from the tree he began to hum an old ditty, as though to keep himself awake :

“Come, all ye bold soldiers,
Who fight for yer king-er—
Come listen unto me—
A song I will sing-er.”

At the end of the last line, which, like the second, was lengthened out with a yawn, he stopped and let his head fairly drop. But he started up, and broke forth—

“’Tis of a brave soldier,
Whose heart it was true-er-r—
Who went to the wars,
And—er—Hi tol de rol lol de rol—”

This chorus came up with a spasmodic effort to wake up ; and having cast a sleepy gaze about him, he faced about to walk back. The moment his back was turned, Robert sprang forward, and with a well-directed blow upon the head felled him to the earth.

Those above saw the movement, and Mark Redcliffe was quickly upon the ground. Karmel came next, and Harry brought up the rear, after which Mark shook off his frock and put it on.

“How is the fellow ? He mustn’t give the alarm,” said Mark.

“I think I’ve cracked his skull,” whispered our hero. “If I haven’t then he’s got a hard one.”

At this moment there was a spasmodic movement of the prostrate body—a sort of twitching of the limbs—and then all was still.

“He’s dead !” said Karmel.

"I am almost sorry," replied Robert. "But it can't be helped. It's the fortune of war."

Mark stooped down and took off the fellow's cartridge-box, and then, having seized his musket, he turned towards the fence.

"Come," he whispered. "We mustn't go directly into the road, or that other sentry may see us. This way. I know the ground. It's life or death with us now! The man who stands in our way must look out for himself!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

As soon as the newly-escaped rebels had assured themselves that they were not yet observed they started on their way, Mark taking the lead. They knew that their escape must be detected in half an hour, if not much less. The sentinel upon the other side of the prison might miss his companion, and go to find him. However, these thoughts only quickened the fugitives, and they sped on.

Mark led the way over the old log fence which enclosed the prison yard, and made for a piece of wood which skirted the field beyond. Under cover of this wood they glided on towards the highway, and when the guide came to the wall which flanked it, he waited for his companions to come up.

"Do you see that fellow just up the road there?" he asked, pointing to the westward.

The rest looked, and plainly saw a human form pacing to and fro across the way where the road branched off. They could see his musket upon his shoulder, and when his feet touched the hard gravel they could hear his heavy measured tread.

"Here," whispered Mark, at the same time pulling off his frock, "just hold this, and I'll settle that fellow. I have a plan in my head. Don't stir until you see him drop."

"Are you sure you can reach him?" queried Karmel.
"Those fellows are strict on the challenge."

"I know it, but I'll blind him. He'll see me in my shirt-sleeves, and he'll think I'm just from the guard-room, or some other place. Don't fear. I'll settle him. When you see him drop then come on."

Thus speaking Mark handed his musket to his brother, and then, with one of the iron rods for a weapon, he leaped over the fence. He walked, or rather trotted, towards the lone sentinel, taking the centre of the road, and carrying his rod behind him.

"Who comes there?" demanded the soldier, as the Rebel approached.

"A friend."

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign!"

"Hold on—never mind countersigns now. Have you—"

"Stand!" interrupted the sentinel, bringing his musket to a charge. "If you have the countersign give it to me!"

"I tell you, never mind the countersign," repeated Mark, nothing daunted by the promptness of the soldier. "I have forgotten it. In the fuss and bother, I didn't half hear it. The mischief is to pay at Major O'Harra's quarters. Has he passed your post within an hour or so?"

"The major?" uttered the soldier, thrown off his guard, but not yet lowering the point of his piece. "Has he gone?"

"Gone? We fear so. There's a man dead at the guard-house, and the major—"

This was Mark's moment. The fellow had brought the butt of his piece to the ground, and had his eyes and ears wide open. The Rebel lifted his iron rod, and, quick as thought, he brought it down upon the soldier's devoted head. He sank upon the ground with his skull almost in two pieces, for that blow had been given for liberty, and had a spice of vengeance in it besides.

The other three came quickly up, and having taken the fallen man's musket and cartridge-box, they started on. There were two more sentinels, though only one of them

was in the way ; and that was the one at the boat-landing. The other one could be avoided.

There were two of these landings. The one above, where the heavy boats crossed, was under the charge of a sergeant's guard, while the one towards which our fugitives were going, was only guarded by a single sentinel—it being only a small affair, with two little skiffs or skulls, for foot-passengers who had occasion to go that way.

The party had gained the top of a gentle rise, not far from the Kills, and from whence the water could be seen, when the report of a musket broke upon the still night air. It was from the camp that the report came. In a moment more a large rocket leaped into the sky, casting a lurid glare over the scene ; and the hum of voices could be plainly heard.

“ We are missed ! ” cried Karmel.

“ And we are lucky to have got so far,” returned Mark. “ If there are no sentinels upon the other side of the water we shall be safe. Do you see that fellow down by the boat ? ”

They all three answered that they did, for he walked close by the water's edge, and the outlines of his form were plainly defined against the bright surface.

“ Then look ye,” the guide resumed—“ let's run down as though we were after the escaped prisoners. We can bother him so as to get a blow at his head before he detects us.”

With this they started ; and in a very few moments they were within hailing distance of the soldier.

“ Who comes there ? ” he shouted, showing by his voice that the sudden signal had startled him, for that single rocket told him that prisoners had escaped.

“ We're after the Rebels ! ” cried Mark, in reply. “ Have they come this way ?—Quick !—a boat ! Have you seen them ? ”

“ No !—there hain't no—”

The remainder of his sentence was lost to the world, for Mark's ponderous bar descended upon his head like a thunder-clap, and took away his senses and his life.

The boat was quickly cast off, and in it the four men

jumped, and then pushed off. To row across—a distance of but little over half a mile—was but a few minutes' work ; and ere long they stood upon the soil of Jersey.

"There !" said Mark, as they stepped upon the shore, "we are clear of the sentinels, but we ain't clear of the infernal Tories yet. They are scattered all about here ; and if any of them have seen that signal, they may be on the lookout."

"Yet we have the advantage," returned Harry. "If we see any signs of motion about any of the houses, we can avoid them."

"Yes, so we can," returned Mark. "But we won't talk about danger till it comes. We'll keep the road, and no half-dozen Tories shall drive us out. Come !"

The party set forward at a quick walk, and at the distance of not quite half a mile they came to a sort of farmhouse, which Robert recognized as the one at which his captors stopped when they brought him on.

"There are horses here, I think," said the leader—Mark was still acknowledged the leader, for he not only knew the country well, but he also knew the Tories and their haunts.

"There are horses there," he repeated.

"And who's in the house ?" asked Karmel.

"That's more than I can tell. Sometimes there are more, and sometimes less. Very often marauding and foraging parties get belated, and stop here until morning, as no man can enter the camp after nine o'clock, without a special pass for that purpose. I think we'd better take a look into the barn."

It was finally agreed that they should do so ; and accordingly they crept up behind the buildings without noise. No one was stirring about the premises, save the Rebels themselves ; so they judged that no one had been awake here to see the signal. If there had been, of course they would have been up and doing ere this.

These buildings were arranged like many others in that section. The house was upon one side of the road, and the barn upon the other. This was so planned to guard against a general conflagration. If the dwelling should burn up, the barn might be saved ; whereas, if the buildings were

close together, a single fire would surely sweep off all. The road, at this place, ran nearly east and west. The dwelling, to which were attached a shed and tool-house, was upon the south side of the way, while the barn was upon the northern side, and very nearly opposite.

The four Rebels crept up to the back of the barn, and seeing a small shutter open, they looked in. They could see the open floor ; and above it, suspended from a fork-handle, the prongs of which were stuck into the hay-mow, was a small glass lantern. This would seem to indicate that there was some one within. But as the narrow place through which they looked only gave them a view of a very small portion of the floor, they could not determine what or who might be on hand.

Mark proposed that they should find the back-door, and see if it could not be opened from without. Accordingly they moved along, and soon came to the door in question, which was found to have a hole in it, made on purpose for the insertion of the arm in unhasping it. This was very easily done by Harry, and in a moment more the door was noiselessly opened. The four stepped in, and looked about them.

To their right was a place for the cows ; to the left were a row of stalls for horses ; and not only were they full, but there were several animals secured by the cows. Front of the stalls was a narrow passage between them and the hay-mow ; and into this passage the Rebels cautiously moved. They felt sure that if there was a watch kept in the barn, it would not be likely to consist of more than one man, or not more than two at the most. When they reached the barn-floor, they found a single man there, sitting upon a block, with his back against the hay, while his head was bobbing up and down, like that of a man who would keep awake if he could.

For a few moments the Rebels hesitated. It was evident, however, that the fellow must be removed, or silenced, if they would get off with horses.

"Stand by !" whispered Mark ; and as he spoke he lifted his own bar, and tapped the sleeper upon the head.

As the fellow tumbled over upon the floor, Harry and

Robert sprang forward and quickly secured him. He opened his eyes just as they were tightening the bandage over his mouth; but he did not seem to have fully recovered his senses. The blow had not cracked the skull, but had confused the brain somewhat.

"Now if we mean to take horses, we must hasten," remarked the old scout, at the same time turning towards the stalls.

"Bring me out a good horse," said Robert, "and I'll select you a saddle."

"I'll do so," the old man returned.

But there was one difficulty in this. Karmel wanted the lantern to assist him in getting the horses, and Robert could not see to select trappings very well in the dark; so the horses were led out first, and then each sought his own saddle and bridle.

Robert had taken the lantern, and having seen a very fine looking set of trappings hanging apart from the others, he approached them. When he came close to them he started, for he recognized the escutcheon of Col. James Lyndarm upon the saddle-bow, and upon the gaudy housing.

"Karmel," he said, "here is the colonel!"

"Eh? Who?" returned the scout, turning toward him.

"Colonel Lyndarm. Is not this saddle his?"

"It is," the old man cried, as soon as he saw it. "By the mass!—look here!" Karmel uttered this last exclamation startling, and it was plain that something of more than ordinary importance was upon his thoughts.

"Here," he added, as he reached the beast he had selected for himself, "whose horse is this?"

Robert looked, and a sudden tremor shook his frame.

"My soul!" he uttered. "It's Eugene's!"

"Eugene who?" asked Mark.

"Eugene Deblois," answered Robert.

"Eugene Deblois! I know him well," continued Mark, much moved. "He belongs in Amboy."

"Yes."

"Why—he's a friend of mine. D'y'e think he's a prisoner here?"

"I fear so. This is surely his—"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Harry, who had been examining the various saddles, "here's a woman's saddle. Wonder if they've got a female prisoner."

At this Robert rushed to the spot. It was a female's saddle. If Eugene were there, might not Clara be there also?

"Good heavens!" he gasped, turning to Karmel, "do you think it possible?"

"Yes. Anything is possible these times. But we'll have it out of this fellow."

A large knife had been taken from the hostler when he was secured by Mark, and as Karmel cast off the bandage from his mouth, the elder brother stood over him with the knife aimed at his heart.

"Now look ye," Karmel said, as he took off the gag, "if you utter one word above a low tone you are a dead man! D'ye understand?"

The hostler, who was, or appeared to be, a simple countryman, was frightened half out of his wits already; and the presence of that knife struck a mortal terror to his soul.

"Oh-ho! I won't! I won't!" he gasped. "Don't kill me! don't kill me!"

"We won't kill you if you tell the truth," returned the scout, sternly. "But you must understand that we are desperate men, and are enemies to you and your companions. Tell us what we wish to know, and you shall not be harmed. Refuse us, or lie to us, and you die on the spot! Now answer me: Is Colonel Lyndarm in the house opposite?"

"Ye-e-s, sir," gasped the terrified man.

"You need not be alarmed if you tell us the truth. Who came with the colonel?"

"There were—a—were—seven men, sir;—three officers, sir, and three of his orderlies, sir."

"That's only six."

"Ah—a—I meant seven in all—seven with him."

"And were there no others came with him?"

"Only two prisoners, sir."

"Aha—two prisoners? Who were they?"

"I don't know, sir; only one was a man, and the other was a woman."

"Was it a young woman?"

"Yes, sir—a very pretty woman, I should judge."

"Didn't you hear her called by any name?"

"No, sir."

"Well—what sort of a looking man was the other prisoner?"

"He was a young man, sir."

"Didn't you hear him called by any name?"

"Only a Rebel captain. I heard 'em call him that."

"You did?"

"Yes, sir."

"And now tell me how many others there are in the house beside these seven men you have told us of, and the two prisoners."

"There's six others, sir."

"Who are they?"

"There's Mr. Buell, and his wife, and one son, and three soldiers."

"How old is this son!"

"About ten, sir."

"Where are the rest of old Buell's children?" asked Mark.

"They're on the Island, sir, with the army there."

"That's it, eh?"

"Yes, sir—it's the truth. So help me God!"

"Very well," said Karmel. "Then you say that there are eleven men in the house?"

The poor fellow pondered a few moments, and then replied:

"Eleven without the old man's wife and the prisoners, sir."

"The old man's wife ain't a man, is she?"

"More of a man than he is," answered the hostler, emphatically.

"Aha—then she'll fight, will she?"

"You'd think so if you should see her sometimes, I guess."

The scout smiled, and after a short pause he continued:

"Where does the colonel sleep?"

"In the front chamber over the parlor."

"And which do you call the parlor?"

"The last room, sir."

"Does he sleep there alone?"

"I believe one of his orderlies has a bed on the floor."

"And where do the soldiers sleep?"

"In the kitchen."

"All of them?"

"All but two. There are two that always stay here; and they sleep in a little room over the front hall."

"Where do the old man and his wife sleep?"

"In the bedroom that leads out of the settin'-room."

"And where is the sitting-room?"

"Opposite the parlor."

"Then their bedroom is back of the sitting-room?"

"Yes, sir."

After this Karmel turned to Robert and asked him if he had any questions to ask.

"One quite important one," returned our hero. "Where are the prisoners?"

"Aye—I forgot them," added the scout. "I was only thinking of those we had to look out for. But where are the prisoners, sir?"

"They're locked up down cellar, sir."

"Both in one place?"

"No, sir. The man is in the great apple-hole; and the lady is in the milk-room."

"What guard is there over them?"

"I don't know, unless some of the soldiers may be kept awake."

"But how are they secured?"

"The man is lashed hand and foot with a strong rope, and his elbows bound back around a stout stone post."

"And the girl?" cried Robert, with a start. "Is she bound like that?"

"Oh, no, sir. She ain't bound to any post."

"But she has her feet and hands lashed, has she?"

"Yes, sir; I think she has."

"Then we've got no time to lose!" cried our hero,

starting back. "Will you go with us?" he asked of Mark and Harry.

"Do you suppose you could keep us out?" was the meaning reply. "Where there's a British tyrant to be punished count us in for the work."

There was no more time wasted in talking. The two prisoners must be freed, and it must be done quickly, too; for pursuers might be at hand ere long. The hostler was again gagged, and then the party started for the house, taking the lantern along with them. The only weapons they had to depend upon were their iron bars; but, come what might of resistance, they were prepared to face it.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE WOLF LOSES HIS PREY AGAIN.

WHEN the Rebel party reached the front door of the dwelling, they stopped a few moments to decide upon how they should move after they had gained access to the hall. Should they at first feign some business, or should they at once attack any and all who might present themselves. The latter plan was quickly adopted, as it was most in consonance with their feelings. They were in no mood for delay of any kind.

Mark tried the door, and found it fast. He then gave a rap upon it; but a second was required before any one was heard to stir within. Shortly after this second summons the door was opened by a soldier, who asked what was wanted. Mark knocked him down and rushed in, the others following closely.

The hall led directly to the kitchen, and upon reaching the latter apartment the soldiers were found to be just in the act of starting up from their sleep. The knocking down of their companion at the door, and the rush of the intruders, had served to awaken them; but the Rebels were upon them ere they could gain their feet. There were four soldiers and one officer, the sixth of the kitchen sleepers having been knocked down at the door. It seemed

that the hostler had not been fully informed of the sleeping arrangements for the night, the two soldiers who usually slept in the hall bedroom having given up their bed to two of the officers who had come with Colonel Lyndarm.

Had it been a possible thing to secure these soldiers without violence it would have been done so ; but the thing was impossible. The men slept with their arms by them, and if they were suffered to gain their feet the result would be fatal. So the Rebels took the only course left. They proceeded at once to knock the newly aroused men over ; and in a very few seconds they were sprawling upon the floor. Karmel and Robert used every precaution to avoid taking life ; but not so Mark and his brother. The death of the white-haired old man whom they called father was upon their memory, and their iron rods fell with the power of vengeance.

"We can bind 'em !" cried Karmel, as he saw the last man knocked down.

"Here's two that I don't think'll need binding," returned Mark.

"And here's another," added Harry.

And it was even so. However, the other two were quickly bound with their own belts ; and just as the job was done a side door was opened, and Colonel Lyndarm appeared, sword in hand, followed by his orderly ; and almost at the same moment an opposite door was opened, and old Buell made his appearance.

"What does all this mean?" savagely asked Lyndarm, flourishing his sword.

"Villain ! I'll show you what it means !" shouted Robert. "Don't you know me ?"

"Who are you ?"

"Captain Robert Pemberton !"

"Aha ! the Rebel brother of my charmer, eh ? We'll soon have you disposed of. Here, men—"

The colonel looked about him as he spoke, and his countenance fell as he found that he had no men to back him. Yet he did not seem fully to realize the odds that were against him, for he raised his sword again, and rushed

upon the youthful Rebel. He had advanced only a step or two when a blow from Karmel's bar laid him low.

The host had meanwhile made his way back to his bedroom, and his wife made her appearance in his place, with a pair of heavy tongs in her hand. Mark knew her, and he knew, too, that if she were not secured at once she would give them trouble.

"Look 'e, Mrs. Buell," he said, "you'd better go back to your room and stay there. If you will you shall not be harmed; nor shall anything about your premises be troubled—none of your property."

"Oh-ho!—it's *you*, is it, Mister Mark Redcliffe?—Mister Mark Red-*hand*! *You* break into my house, do ye? Git out, I say!"

Mark dodged a blow from her tongs, and at the same moment Harry caught her from behind and held her arms. Two belts were taken from one of the dead soldiers, and with these she was bound. She shouted and screamed like a wild beast; but her valorous husband showed his discretion by staying in the bedroom, unless he had clambered out of the window and ran off. Her noise was stopped, however, by binding up her mouth with the kerchief which she wore on her head.

In the mean while Lyndarm had been bound, though he had not yet recovered from the effects of the blow he had received.

"Where are the other two officers that came with the colonel?" queried Robert.

"Here are all the soldiers," said Mark; "so they may be in the little bedroom over the hall. But look ye! Harry and I'll bind this fellow, and stay here to receive 'em if they come, while you two go down cellar."

The man to be bound was the orderly who had come down with the colonel; and as the brothers turned to attend to the work, Robert and Karmel took lights and started for the cellar. They found it without difficulty and having called Eugene's name a response came from an extreme corner. Thither Karmel hastened, while his companion moved towards what appeared to be a milk-room.

The door was secured by a padlock on the outside, but there was no key in it.

"Clara!" he cried.

Some one moved within, and a faint voice said:

"Who is it?"

Without further speaking Robert inserted one end of his iron bar within the link of the padlock, and with one quick wrench tore it off. In a moment more the door was thrown open, and he entered. He saw his sister, and for the moment he hoped Lyndarm was dead. She was bound, hand and foot; and the noise she had made was only by the moving of the box on which she sat. The lashings were cast off, and then the fond sister was pressed to her brother's bosom.

"Oh, Clara—my sister!" he uttered, almost overcome with sorrow for her suffering, and rage against the wretch who had caused it; "God be thanked that I have found you. You are not hurt? Oh, tell me he has not hurt you!"

"Only what you see," the maiden murmured, clinging frantically to her brother.

"Then we were in time. But come. We must get away from here as quickly as possible. Come, Clara, dear; you have nothing to fear from him. I will save you now."

"But where is Eu—"

The girl had spoken half of her lover's name when she saw him coming with Karmel. Eugene leaped forward and caught her hand, and his first word was to ask the same question which Robert had just propounded. It was a joyous meeting, for the presence of their two friends gave promise of liberty, and Eugene felt easy when he learned that his loved one was returned to him safe.

"Ha!—There's a row upstairs!" cried Karmel, leaping up the steps as he spoke.

Robert quickly followed, leaving Eugene to conduct Clara. But his assistance was not needed. Mark and Harry had done the work before Karmel got up. The two officers—two lieutenants—had come down from upstairs, and the Rebel brothers had knocked them down, and one of them, certainly, was dead.

All the inmates of the house were now accounted for save the host ; but as he did not make his appearance, no further thought was held of him. To think of carrying off any prisoners was out of the question. Pursuers must be along soon—they might be at hand even now. So they took all the weapons they could find, amounting to seven pairs of pistols and five swords, and then turned away. From the time of their entering the house up to the present time had not been long—not over fifteen minutes at the furthest—for they had worked smartly. They had found their enemies half asleep, and all unprepared for resistance, and hence their work had been comparatively easy. Mark and Harry did stop one moment to ascertain how many were alive of the Tory soldiers. They found five men, including Lyndarm, and one of the officers who had come down last. The rest were either dead, or so near like it that no sign of life could be detected.

They now made for the stable, where horses were quickly brought out and caparisoned ; and ere long the whole party were in their saddles. Robert had just gathered up his reins when the sound of voices fell upon his ear, and upon turning his gaze to the eastward he could just see the outlines of a score or more of dark forms rapidly approaching the house. They were afoot, and from their manner and tone it was at once evident that they were pursuers.

"See !" our hero cried. "Look there !"

"We are safe," said the scout, as soon as he saw the men. "They must stop at the house first to inquire who has just ridden away. Then they'll have to stop there to wonder a spell—then go to the stable and set free the hostler. Ho—we have the vantage now. Come—away !"

Mark and Harry wheeled about and dashed away, and the rest followed close behind ; and in a few moments the buildings of Master Buell were lost to sight. They did not slacken their speed until they had gained a point beyond which their pursuers would not dare to follow.

After this the party drew together, and, by request, Eugene related the circumstances of his capture.

"About three weeks ago," he commenced, "I received a letter from Amboy stating that my old aunt was very sick,

and not expected to live ; and also that she wished very much to see me. How could I avoid going? She had taken care of me from a child up, and had been all that a mother could possibly be. I was then with my company, but I left as soon as I could, and went to Elizabethtown, where I stopped to see Clara. When she learned where I was going she expressed a wish to go with me. I thought there could, or would, be no danger, and consented to her accompanying me.

"We reached Amboy in safety, and I found my aunt very low ; but the kind and careful nursing of Clara did much towards restoring her. I remained until I knew that she would recover, and then she bade me rejoin my company. We started from Amboy towards the middle of the afternoon—intending to stop for the night at the house of my friend Davids, in Rahway. I knew that there were several Tory families on the road, and that British soldiers might travel that way ; but I had no apprehension.

"We had gained about half the distance, and were leisurely ascending a hill, at the top of which the road makes an abrupt turn to the left, about a ledge. We had gained the summit, and were upon the point of turning, when we met Colonel Lyndarm and six others. Clara uttered a quick cry, and as she did so I recognized the officer. At first I thought of turning, and might have done so, had not the colonel instantly dashed in front of Clara and caught her bridle-rein.

"I drew my sword, and rode forward to cut him down. But by this time the others seemed to understand their leader's plans, for two of them drew their swords and rushed at me. Of course you can guess the result. To fight was out of the question ; and after Lyndarm caught Clara's rein flight was equally impossible. We were taken prisoners, and carried to the place where you found us."

"And that was last evening, was it?" said Robert.

"Yes. We were taken there, and there we were confined as you saw. Lyndarm told Clara he should have to put her under lock and key in a dubious place for this one night ; but that after this she should enjoy a better home. You can judge of my feelings. I had little hope of escape,

for I knew we were not far from the British camp, and that no American party would be likely to pass that way. But the deliverance came when I least expected it."

"Karmel," said Robert, turning to the scout, "when you and I were taken prisoners, I did not think a work of good was being commenced; but we can see it now. Does it not seem as though God directed our capture for my sister's salvation?"

"It does, certainly," the old scout replied.

"And we seem to be mixed up in the matter," said Mark. "It seems to be a kind of a mutual concern all round. If we hadn't been there you couldn't have got off. And then, if we hadn't all been together, you mightn't have been able to set your sister free after all."

"It is a strange network of circumstances, and no mistake," replied Robert. "All have worked together for this general result, with no apparent relation between them at the commencement, but all necessary to the end. The more I think of it the more I see the hand of a Power above our own."

The conversation remained upon this subject for some time, and it might have continued longer than it did, had not the party reached a point where the two brothers were obliged to turn off.

"We must part here," said Mark, as he held Robert by the hand; "but I hope we shall meet again."

"If we live we will meet," answered our hero.

"Well," resumed Mark, with much feeling, "be it on the battle-field, or the road, or in an enemy's prison, we will meet shoulder to shoulder in a good cause."

They all said amen to that; then followed an affectionate leave-taking all around; and in a few minutes more the darkness had hidden the parties from each other.

Both Karmel and Robert knew that they had parted with two noble men, and for a while they were almost lonesome; but gradually the feeling wore away, and the conversation flowed more freely.

Our friends pushed on, and just as the first gray streaks of coming morn appeared in the east, the dim, shadowy outlines of the houses of New Brunswick opened to their sight, in the distance ahead.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON THE RACK.

WHEN Rosalie Lincoln knew that Robert had been taken from her—that his deadly enemies had seized him—and that Karmel had been taken with him, she was completely overcome by anguish and terror that for a long time she was utterly powerless. She sank upon a seat, and would have fallen to the floor had not Andrew held her up. He and Kate tried to comfort her ; but it was of no avail. She could not weep—she could not even moan. Her heart had sunk, like a thing of death, in her bosom, and her tongue had lost its power. Her eyes glared wildly about at first, and then sank dimly down. They brought water and chafed her temples, and bathed her aching brow.

At length she gazed up. There was a faint, painful smile upon her pale features, as though she would thus express her gratitude for their kindness.

"Alas !" she murmured, "you need not bathe my brow. You cannot reach the place of my agony !"

As she spoke she pressed both hands upon her heart, and held them there a long while.

"Do not give up all hope yet," urged Andrew. "They may make their escape."

"Escape?" repeated the poor girl, in a startling tone. "Oh, do not mock me! Have not their deadly enemies got them? Were there not many soldiers?"

"Yes—many—a large company. Had there been but a few they should not have taken him."

"I believe you, Andrew. I know your noble heart, and your generous soul ; and I know your courage, too. But what can save Robert now? Do you not know the order that has been given concerning both him and Karmel?"

"You mean—"

"Why do you hesitate?"

"Alas! Rose, I did not think of that order! Oh, would to God there were a company of Patriots here!"

"It's too late!" the maiden groaned. "There are none

in the place. They are all away. Oh, Robert ! Robert ! would that I were with thee, so that I could but rest my head upon thy bosom once again, and then breathe my life away with thine ! ”

“ You would not die, Rose ! ”

“ Die ? If *he* dies why should I live ? Could I but go away to some place of retirement and there cherish the memory of the lost ones, I might at least be patiently waiting the coming of the dark angel ; but see what a lot must be mine ! Oh, Robert ! Robert ! ”

At this point Rosalie removed her hands from her heart and placed them over her eyes ; and as she did so she burst into tears. They were the first she had shed since the terrible agony had come upon her.

“ Come, Rose,” urged Kate, winding her arms about the neck of the weeping girl. “ Come—let’s go up to our room.”

Rosalie looked up through her tears, and was upon the point of speaking, when a loud rap was heard upon the outer door.

“ It’s my father ! ” she cried, starting to her feet.

“ Your father ? ” repeated Andrew with a sudden emotion. “ Your father—at this time ? Ah !—he knows of this, then ! ”

“ And he has had it all done ! ” she added, in an agonized whisper.

Another rap, louder than the first, came upon the door, and Andrew turned towards it. But before he left the room he turned to the maiden and spoke :

“ What shall I tell him, if it is your father ? ”

“ Tell him—tell him—that I can not go to-night.”

Andrew reached the door just as the third knock came. He opened it, and saw a man who carried a lantern in his hand ; and as soon as his eyes became set to the gloom of the night he recognized Sir Arthur.

“ Do you sleep with plugs in your ears ? ” the baronet asked, savagely.

“ I don’t go prowling about neighbors’ houses after midnight ! ” replied Andrew, quickly and pointedly.

“ But you house runaways, sir ! ” continued Lincoln.

"When they run away from villains and tyrants!" added the youth, very independently.

Sir Arthur struggled for some moments to find an appropriate phrase ugly enough to express his feelings; but before he found it he seemed to realize that he was making a fool of himself, so he curbed his passion and opened upon the business of his visit.

"My daughter is here?" he said, interrogatively.

There was a dim idea of deception flashed through the gunsmith's mind; but he gave it up ere it was fully formed, for it could avail Rosalie nothing; so he replied:

"She is, sir."

"I will go in and see her."

There was another momentary struggle in the young man's bosom. Should he allow the applicant to enter, or should he try to protect the fugitive? But what could he do? Sir Arthur had law upon his side, and that was all powerful. It was a hard alternative, but he could do nothing else; so he moved back and allowed the baronet to enter. He led the way to the little sitting-room where the two girls sat, and the visitor followed him.

Rosalie knew too well who had come. She felt it in the sinking of her heart, and in the new pain that came to her head. She tried to prepare for the meeting; but she could call up no power of endurance. She heard that well-known, stately tread; and under the impulse of unconquerable fright she closed her eyes and pressed her palms hard upon them.

The baronet advanced and placed his hand upon her arm.

"Rosalie," he said, in a tone which at once betrayed the effort he made to hide his anger, "you will go to your home. Do you understand?"

"Home?" she murmured, without looking up.

"Yes—with your father!"

"I have no home, sir. Oh, I have no home!"

"You haven't, eh? If you'll have the kindness to come with me, I'll show you one. I trust you are not going to urge me to use force."

As he thus spoke he gave the poor girl a gripe upon the

arm that hurt her, and at the same time raised her to her feet. He did not mean that anybody should see the act ; and perhaps he did not mean to do it at all. But Rosalie uttered a cry of pain, and with a quick movement started from her father's hand. He was upon the point of springing after her, when Andrew interferred.

"You will not harm the maiden beneath this roof, sir !" he said, quickly, and in a tone which showed that his soul was in arms.

"Who are you !" the baronet retorted, turning upon the youth angrily.

"I am master here, sir !" was the stern response.

"Then mind your own business, upstart !"

"Arthur Lincoln," spoke the young host, with a flashing eye and burning cheek, "you had better govern that tongue of yours. Remember, you are in my house ; and if you dare to open your lips in impudence to me again, I'll lay you upon this floor as I would a man who had come to rob me ! I am mad now, sir ; so you will be wise to take heed !"

The baronet started back a step and measured the youth with his eye ; and he evidently made up his mind that in a physical encounter he would be no match for the athletic gunsmith ; so he swallowed his rage as well as he could, and then turned to Rosalie. She had already made up her mind to go with him, for she feared that danger would fall upon her friends if she remained longer.

"Are you going?" the parent asked, in a hoarse whisper.

"Yes, sir. I am ready."

As Rosalie said so, she turned towards Kate and sank upon her neck.

"Farewell !" she murmured. "God will bless you for your kindness. Pray for me. If we never—"

She could speak no further. Her feelings overpowered her, and turning quickly away she moved towards the door. She did not stop for her father, nor did she look towards him ; but passing through the hall she gained the yard—on to the street—and towards her former home—walking like one in a dream, without end or aim.

Sir Arthur feared at first that she might think of escape ; but when he observed her manner his fears were gone, and he followed on quietly behind her.

When Rosalie reached the house she ascended the front steps and found the door unlocked. She entered, and went at once to the room she had been wont to occupy. She heard her father enter, and she wondered if he would come to her. She listened ; she heard him open the parlor door, and in a moment more close it. She thought he had gone in. But no ; she heard him ascend the stairs. He came to her room and looked in.

"You're safe for the night, at all events."

Thus spoke the baronet, and then he turned away ; and Rosalie saw him no more that night. It was now near two o'clock, and she threw herself upon the bed. It was a long time ere she could sleep ; but, finally, exhausted nature gave way, and she sank into a dreamy slumber, from which she was ever and anon started by the terrible phantoms that haunted her dreams.

In the morning—towards seven o'clock—the door of Rosalie's chamber was opened, and Mrs. Nancy Reed entered. The poor girl started up from the edge of the bed, where she was sitting, upon beholding this woman, for she knew the character of the widow well.

"Would you like some breakfast ?" the woman asked.

"Where is Patience ?" returned Rosalie.

"She's gone away, miss. She ain't here now. I'm in her place."

"You ?—You in Aunt Patience's place ?" cried Rosalie, with a new agony.

"Of course I be," said the woman, with dignity. "How d'ye suppose yer father could keep a housekeeper who gave him no peace ?"

"Did he tell you that Aunt Patience gave him no peace ?"

"He told me all about her. She was a very strange woman."

"And you are in her place ?"

"I am. But do you want some breakfast ?"

"You may bring me something—some coffee—some toast—anything you have handy."

"You shall have it."

The new housekeeper left, and Rosalie sank back upon the bed. She saw that her father had resolved that she should have no sympathizers; and she saw that he meant to carry out his plans to the very letter. She thought of Robert, and uttered an earnest prayer in his behalf.

"Perhaps he is dead!" she murmured to herself.

The thought came painfully and with terrible agony. She thought how he had last looked upon her—she called to mind the look of love that beamed upon his face—she looked back upon his noble features—and then she fancied she saw him dead. She pictured his form swinging from the gallows-tree—and as the scene dwelt in her imagination a deep groan burst from her lips, and she sank forward and covered her face with her hands.

And why should she not think it was so? She knew that her lover was in the hands of his enemies; and also that an order had been given, by one who must be obeyed, that he should be hung as soon as taken. It was to her evident enough that ere this the noble youth had fallen.

After a while Mrs. Reed returned with the maiden's breakfast. As she placed the tray upon the table, she hesitated as though she had something to say. She gazed first upon Rosalie, and then she looked upon the floor, and rubbed her hands. The girl looked directly upon her face, else she might not have let her eyes drop as they did. But finally she spoke:

"Miss Rose, Elroy Pemberton is a very fine man, isn't he?"

Rosalie continued gazing in the woman's face, but she made no reply.

"I think he's one of the nicest, and finest, and most beautifullest young men I ever saw."

Still Rosalie made no answer.

"I s'pose there's men as good as he is; but then when ye know a man—when ye've known him from a boy up—why, then he seems kind o' nearer like, ye know."

Another pause, with no reply—and then the woman resumed, with a forced smile upon her face :

“ I don’t doubt that Elroy may have relatives as is very good men. I know some of his cousins. I have known ’em a long while. I may say that *some* of ’em nobody knows *better* than I do. But I must say that there ain’t one of ’em—no, not *one* of ’em—that can begin to compare with him. I love Elroy—he’s sich a nice man.”

Rosalie gazed into the speaker’s face with an expression of bitter contempt upon her pallid features, and this time she replied :

“ Did my father bid you speak to me thus ? ” she said, in a tone of withering rebuke.

“ Oh—bless yer soul—no. *He* don’t know what I think of Elroy.”

“ Then I do not care to know. If you have any duty to perform in this room, you are at liberty to do it ; but you will keep your unasked opinions to yourself. You served Colonel Lyndarm well. Perhaps you are now ready to serve my father with the same degree of faithfulness.”

“ Oh !—you’re up, aren’t ye ? ” uttered Mrs. Reed, in a tone of ironical indignation. “ Yer tongue’s found its power agin, haint it ? D’yer s’pose *I* care for yer impudence ? ”

Rosalie’s eyes flashed, and the color came to her cheeks. She would bear much from a man whom she could not oppose ; but not from a miserable hireling who had let her body and soul to a work of tyranny for money. She arose from her seat upon the side of the bed and went to the door and threw it open. Then she moved back a few paces, and gazing sternly into the foul woman’s face she pointed to the way she had opened.

“ Why—a—what d’ye mean ? ” stammered the new housekeeper, gazing first upon the door, and then upon the calm, stern, and dignified girl.

“ Go ! ” pronounced Rosalie, deeply and imperiously.

“ Go ? ” repeated the woman, as though she did not comprehend.

“ Yes—go ! ”

“ But s’pose I wouldn’t ? ”

"Then I shall go ! Where you hold your foul presence I cannot stay !"

As Rosalie thus spoke she moved towards the door. Mrs. Reed hesitated a moment, and then she started. She knew that she was transcending the bounds of duty in forcing her presence upon the maiden, and she feared she might lose her new place if complaint were made.

"Oh, you needn't work yerself up into a passion," she said, very sarcastically as she supposed. "I don't want to stay where I ain't wanted. Nobody needn't ever be afraid of my company if they think they can find any better !"

As Mrs. Reed passed out Rosalie returned to her seat ; and when she was left alone she lost the firmness that had supported her, and wept. But she soon recovered herself, and then went to the table where her breakfast was. She ate some, and drank the coffee, and after this sank into a chair by the bed.

The simple eating of that scant breakfast was an important event to her. It was the last step to her prison. Before breakfast her father would not come ; but after—alas ! the next event must be his coming ; and with a bowed head and painfully beating heart she awaited it !

CHAPTER XXXII.

A DELAY.

As soon as Sir Arthur Lincoln had eaten his breakfast, he put on his hat and walked over to the office of the justice whom he had engaged to perform the ceremony. But he found the office closed. He went to the house, and was there informed that the Squire had gone to Morristown, and would not be back before the next morning. This was bad. He returned to his dwelling, and found Elroy Pemberton just arrived.

"How long before we will go at work?" asked the young man, after the usual remarks incident upon such a meeting.

“A curse upon the luck!” cried the baronet folding his hands together, and starting across the room.

“Why—what has happened?” asked Elroy, eagerly.

“That infernal lawyer has gone to Morristown and won’t be back till morning.”

“Isn’t there anybody else who can do as well?”

“You must remember, sir, that there is something peculiar about this,” said the host, rather abruptly, considering to whom he was speaking.

“I know. But then you have the law on your side.”

“I don’t know about that. I doubt if any minister in the town could be trusted to attempt the work.”

“Ah?”

“Yes, sir.”

“But why?”

“Why, if Rosalie refused to answer they would not go on.”

“But would she dare to refuse?”

“Would she dare?” repeated Sir Arthur, stopping and gazing half sarcastically into Elroy’s face. “I should think you knew her well enough by this time. *Dare?* She’d dare anything. You may be sure that no power of earth can make her open her lips if she has made up her mind that she won’t! She’s like her mother—Like her mother! Ho! What an accursed fool I was!”

“A what?” uttered Elroy, in amazement.

“I was speaking to myself, sir.”

Elroy said “Oh—ah,” and then took a seat; and ere long the other did the same. A silence of some moments caused and finally Sir Arthur said:

“Well—I don’t know as it will make much difference, after all. He’ll be back to-morrow morning, and then we’ll have this done right up. By the mass, I was never so thwarted before! It does seem as though the fates were against us.”

“Yet all is safe now,” suggested the young man.

“Yes, sir,” answered the host, emphatically. “There can be no more thwarting. The girl is safe; and as for those two Rebel villains, they’re on their way to the gallows by this time!”

"Yes, sir," returned Elroy, about as emphatically as his companion had used the same words.

"Then we have nothing more to fear," resumed Lincoln. "Let it be until to-morrow, and then we'll have the thing done as soon as the Squire comes home. I'll him have here the first thing."

"But Rosalie—you have her—"

"Don't give yourself any uneasiness on that score. I have a woman here upon whom I can depend, and she has nothing else to do beside taking care of the girl. So she's safe enough."

In the mean time Rosalie sat in her room awaiting the coming of her father.

He came at length, and it was near noon. There was a look of triumph mingled with the sternness upon his face now; and he seemed to regard the girl more in the light of the light of a subdued one than as one whom he was yet to conquer.

"Well, Miss Rebellion," he said, taking a seat near her, "how do you feel to-day?"

Rosalie looked up into his face, and after a moment's hesitation she replied:

"I feel very badly, sir."

"Ah? I am sorry for that. I had hoped that the atmosphere of home would revive you."

The poor girl started in astonishment at this remark. The words did not mean much, but then they had a deep significance to her. They were of themselves trifling and ironical; and then they were spoken so sarcastically that she had to believe that he almost felt pleasure in her suffering. Or, at least, he had no more feeling for her than he might have for a strange dog!

"To-morrow morning," he continued, seeing that she did not speak, "the grand event will come off. All preparation is made, and there will be no delay beyond that time. I come up now merely to inform you that you may make such arrangements about your dress as you see fit. In the morning there may be no time—you may be married by daylight; and perhaps not until the middle of the fore-

noon. But be married to-morrow forenoon you will, if I have to do it myself."

"*You?*" said Rosalie, gazing fearfully up.

"Yes. I have the power to do it. But I shall not, if I can avoid it. However, that matters not, I simply wish you to know that you are liable to be called on at any moment after daybreak to-morrow; and you are at liberty to make such preparation for the event as you please."

Rosalie said nothing in reply, and without further remark the baronet arose and left the room.

During the day Sir Arthur went over to the residence of the justice again, and this time he saw the hostess herself. She told him her husband would return that evening—that the servant had only been informed that he would not be in his office until morning, and hence the reply Mr. Lincoln had received on his previous visit. He bade the woman say to her husband, on his return, that his attendance would be required the first thing in the morning. Having received a promise that this message should be delivered, the baronet took his leave.

The day passed away; and when the evening came, Rosalie sat at her window and gazed out upon the scene. One by one the stars set themselves in the dark azure vault; and when they were all twinkling there, the maiden heaved a deep sigh, and a tear rolled down her cheek and fell upon her folded hands.

"My mother is there!" she murmured to herself, as she gazed off to the heavenly lights. "Oh, how happy I should be if I thought I were going now to join her in that world of light! Would that my spirit were even now wending its way up those diamond steps to the throne of my Best Father! And I might meet Robert there, too!"

This last thought seemed to have come suddenly upon her, for she ceased speaking, and a fearful shudder shook her frame. She could not, as she looked out upon the evening scene, and felt the soft, balmy air fan her fevered brow, help wandering back in memory to the old scenes long passed away. She remembered how she walked out on such evenings with him whom she now supposed dead; how they had talked of the joy the future held in store

for them ; and how much they had enjoyed the fanciful painting of bright scenes in time to come.

These thoughts crowded thickly upon her, and the hours passed away without note of time. Those moments were not, perhaps,

“Diamond sparks, that glittered as they passed,”

but they were moments devoted to viewing the worn and broken jewels of the heart, that had “glittered” in times gone by.

The sound of a clock-bell broke the stillness, and she listened. One—two—three—four—and so on to twelve ! Was it possible ?—midnight ? It was only a few moments ago that she sat down there by the window !

Twelve o'clock ! Midnight ! *Morning* !—morning of the new day ! Morning of the day that was to see her the crushed and broken thing her father would make her !

“Roll on—on—on !” she murmured, clasping her hands over her heart, and pressing them there. That had become a habit with her of late—that pressing of the hands upon her heart ; for she felt pain there—deep, fearful pain : “Roll on, ye bright stars—roll on as swiftly as ye can. If within the mystic lights thou holdst the destinies of our race, then roll out my poor pilgrimage here, and take my soul into thy keeping. Oh, it must be light where ye are—it must be all joyous up there ! Mother ! mother !—oh, canst thou hear me now ? Canst thou hear my prayer ? Whisper to me, if thou hast the power ! Come ! come ! come !—”

As the poor girl spoke these last words, she raised her clasped hands high above her head, and the hot tears rolled down her pale cheeks in a flood. A few moments she remained so, and again she murmured :

“Come—come—come ! Mother—come !”

Slowly she arose, and moved towards her bed. She had no light—she wanted none. In the deep gloom she prepared for her couch, and ere long her wet cheek was upon her pillow. She prayed that she might not have another night of such horrible visions as had visited her in

the nights that were passed. Finally, with her mother's name half pronounced upon her lips, she sank to sleep.

She lay thus, buried in profound slumber, for a long while. Tired nature was finding repose. At length she dreamed. Others said she dreamed ; and she did not, in the times which followed, deny it ; but she did love to think that there was more than a dream in the vision of that hour.

She was wandering by a gently murmuring brook, in a sweet wood. Robert was by her side ; her arm clasped confidently in his, and her gaze fixed upon his handsome features. They talked of love, and laid plans for the future, as they had done many times before. It was a strange wood to her, and she asked her lover where it was. He told her it was called the Wood of Fate ; and that the torrent which she saw dashing and roaring through it was the River of Death. She shuddered at the tone of his voice, and yet she could not help smiling, for she saw only a babbling brook.

"A river?—a torrent?" she said: "What mean you?"

"See!" answered Robert, in a startling tone; "are thine eyes opened now?"

Immediately a deafening roar burst upon her ears, and upon turning she found that the brook had sure changed to a torrent. The water went dashing down with furious force, and rocks and trees were taken with it. Rosalie became alarmed, and clung more closely to her companion's side.

Suddenly the heavens were overcast, and the wood grew dark as night. She heard a crash above her, and upon looking up, she saw the top of a huge precipice giving way, and a wild torrent about to burst upon them. She sprang upon one side—and she was safe! But not so with Robert. The flood caught him—it took him up—he uttered one quick cry of alarm—and then he was borne away.

Rosalie wrung her hands in agony. She cried aloud for help—she rushed on after her lover—on, on, on,—never noticing that she trod the water as though it had been the firm earth. Away into the darkness was her companion carried—and away she rushed. She now noticed that she

was walking upon the surface of the water ; yet she seemed not alarmed, though she did not feel that her footing was sure. Finally she came to a huge wall, and here the torrent ended, forming an inky sea, upon the bosom of which stood a great prison. Men were standing about, and she asked them for her lover. They pointed to the window. She looked. From the window projected a beam, and from the outer end of that hung Robert by the neck ! He was just in the death-struggle. She saw that they were British soldiers who stood about, and she had no more courage to ask for help.

As she would have rushed towards a gate which she saw open, she felt an invisible power seize her by the hair, and lift her up. Up—up—up she was borne ! She closed her eyes in terror, and as she did so, she felt herself set down. She gazed about her, and she was back in the same sweet wood, and close by ran the murmuring brook. But her lover was not with her.

Presently a mist gathered before her—around about her, and a light gleamed out from it, and a voice said :
“ Fear not—I am with thee ! ”

It was her mother's voice. She gazed up, and there—directly before her—stood her mother. The same old smile was upon her face ; the same look of love beamed from her soft eyes ; and over all was spread a joyous, hopeful expression which at once quelled the tumult of the daughter's soul.

“ Rosalie, my beloved child,” spoke the bright presence, at the same time extending her arms, “ I say unto thee, fear not ! A spirit of power is over thee, and a spirit of faithful love is about thee. The wicked shall not have power forever ! ”

“ Mother ! Mother ! Shall I come and be with thee ? ”

“ Not yet, my child—not yet. But thou art blessed. Angels watch over thee, and a good spirit guides thee.”

Rosalie would have spoken again, but the presence melted away into the now misty light ; and soon it was all dark. The maiden started when she found the light gone, and as she did so she awoke. She started up in her bed and gazed around. The first streaks of coming day were

already relieving the gloom, and the stars were disappearing from the heavens.

It was some moments before the maiden could fairly understand her situation. The strange dream she had just experienced was so vividly fixed upon her mind that she could not at once divest herself of the idea of its reality. She looked around to see if that bright presence were really gone.

But the truth gradually worked its way to her mind, though she felt that her prayer had been answered. That her mother had appeared to her she tried to believe. It was a happifying thought, and she could not give it up.

The light was breaking gradually in upon the darkness of the passing night, and as the maiden felt that she could sleep no more, she arose ; and having thrown on her garments, she sat down by the window. One bright star was yet visible, and she watched until it became swallowed up in the glory of the greater light that was coming to rule the day. She still felt the agony of the fate that was fixed for her ; but yet the memory of her vision did much towards rendering her calm and collected. She had made up her mind that they should not see her weep ; and also that they should not have from her one word of consent to their plan.

As the morning advanced she fixed her toilette as usual, and then sat down to await the coming of her breakfast. She would not dress for a wedding, though she knew she had garments particularly appropriate therefor. If she assumed such a garb she would thereby tacitly acknowledge the she recognized the ceremony which they might perform ; so she had merely clothed herself as usual, and thus she awaited the coming of events.

Ere long Mrs. Reed came with the breakfast. She set the tray upon the table, and then turned to the maiden.

"Miss Rose," she said, with a very palpable spice of triumph in her tone. "Ye'll be wanted in a short time in the parlor."

"Were you bade to tell me so ?" the girl asked.

"I was, Miss. Yer father—yer good, kind, noble, rever-

ant, handsome, most-sufferin' an' patientist father *ever* was—told me to tell ye so."

"I understand you."

Mrs. Reed waited for some moments to see if Rosalie would not say something more; for she evidently had a whole broadside of remark ready to let off if she could only have something to aim at.

The fact was, the woman had a bit of vengeance in store. She had not wholly forgiven the maiden for the independence and imperiousness of the day before. So she meant to draw her intended victim out. Hence her last remark. But it fell short of its object. Rosalie gazed into her face a few moments, and the only feeling she could entertain was one of pure disgust. So she very quietly said:

"Perhaps you are not aware that your presence is very disagreeable to me."

"Eh?—My presence?" uttered the woman in astonishment.

"I hope you understand me. Rather than starve, I would be willing to bear the infliction of your presence long enough to admit of your bringing my food, and then removing the empty dishes. If you have such an element in your moral composition as compassion, I beg of you to show it by leaving me!"

As the maiden thus spoke, she moved to the window, and gazed out into the garden.

"Well!" gasped the confounded woman, gazing after the girl with a look of mingled rage and disappointment. "I declare! Some folks is mighty nice, I guess! Wonder if they'll feel so when they get a husband! Ahem!"

She looked hard at the maiden, but she had not the power to move her; and when she became assured that Rosalie would not reply any more, she gave her head a majestic toss and swept from the room. When she was gone our heroine turned towards the table, and finally seated herself beside it.

But she could not eat. Food was repulsive to her, feeling as she felt then.

"You'll be wanted in a short time in the parlor!"

The words still rang in her ears, and tortured her heart. They meant a lifetime of suffering and woe to her !

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE GATHERING STORM.

THERE were three persons at the breakfast-table of Sir Arthur Lincoln. The host sat in his usual place, with Elroy upon his left and the lawyer upon his right. The latter had received an invitation to breakfast with the baronet, and he was not the man to miss such an opportunity. "Ah—ahem—I took breakfast with my friend Sir Arthur this morning,"—or yesterday morning—or any other morning that passing time might have left it. This lawyer was both a miser and a glutton and as unscrupulous inside of written law as man could well be. The baronet knew his workman.

"Shall I help you to some more of this toast, sir?" said the host, out of mere politeness; for he supposed the Squire had done eating.

"Yes—you may. That toast is good. And you may give me another piece of that meat while you are about it."

Sir Arthur helped the gormand to a plateful.

But the man's stomach had but a certain capacity, and finally he had to stop eating. He disliked much to do it, as his wistful look towards the toast and meat plainly told; but he couldn't hold any more, so he leaned back in his chair and wiped his lips and cheeks.

"Now, sir, I'm ready for business," he said, looking upon the baronet with a patronizing smile.

"Thank you," returned the host; and after a short pause he added: "I suppose you know what you've got to do?"

"Certainly, sir. I know it very well."

"And you remember that my word is law—that what I say for my own household must be done?"

"Most assuredly, sir."

"And you know that I can bestow my daughter's hand in marriage, even though she objects?"

"Of course you can, sir."

"But you'll remember this point, Squire. The girl may refuse to answer."

"Oh, that won't make any difference. When I ask the questions, if you see she ain't a-goin' to answer, you must answer for her."

"I'll do so. And now let's prepare. How is it, Elroy, do you feel prepared for the ordeal?"

"Me?—Rather think I do, sir. I love your daughter, Sir Arthur—I love her truly. But yet, I tell you plainly, that I'd marry her now, if it were only for revenge. By the mass, she's hurled her insults at my head enough, I think."

"I don't blame you, my boy. I think when there are twenty thousand dollars to go with her hand, I have some right to say where it shall go."

This last remark was directed, apparently, to the attorney, and he said:

"Why—of course you have. You would be a funny man if you didn't."

"I believe all is ready," resumed the baronet. "Come, we'll adjourn to the parlor now. You and Elroy can go in there, and I'll join you before long, with the lady."

The lawyer and the youth went into the parlor, while the host ascended to the apartment of his child.

Rosalie still sat by her window, and was gazing vacantly upon a scene without. Her face was very pale, and her hands were both in that old place over the heart. She heard the heavy footfall upon the stairs—she turned and listened—and she knew it was her father's.

Presently the door was opened, and Sir Arthur entered. He walked up to where the girl sat, and having gazed into her upturned face a few moments, he said:

"My child, all is ready, and I suppose you are prepared?"

"Ready?" repeated the poor girl, trembling in spite of her efforts to appear calm.

"Aye—all is ready. Are you prepared?"

"Prepared?" she uttered, in the same vacant tone.

"You know what I mean. Are you ready?"

"I have prepared for nothing, sir. You have the power.

I am your victim. I am defenseless—helpless. Do as you will; but *ask* me nothing."

For a moment the baronet seemed inclined to be angry; but when he looked again upon the woe-marked features before him he turned his head half away, and said:

"Then come with me. Shall I lead you?"

"I can follow, sir."

"Very well. Then be it so. Come."

Thus speaking the man moved towards the door, and Rosalie arose to follow. Once she stopped and pressed her hands upon her brow, and then moved on. They reached the hall—Sir Arthur had his hand upon the latch of the parlor door; but he heard no steps behind him. He turned and saw Rosalie leaning up against the wall at the foot of the stairs.

Was she dead? She looked so ghastly pale he thought she must be! He hastened to her side and took her hand.

"Rosalie!"

She looked up, and a fearful tremor shook her frame. Then, with a startled expression, she gazed quickly about her.

"Did you see her?" she asked, in a hushed whisper.

"See whom?"

"*My mother!*"

"Your mother? Are you out of your head?"

Once more the maiden pressed hands upon her brow and closed her eyes.

"I saw her," she whispered; "and she spoke to me. She said—"

"What? What did she say?" asked the baronet, whose mind, naturally superstitious, had become fastened by the girl's strange, earnest manner. "What do you mean? How did you see her?"

"I saw her just as I saw her last night, or this morning. As I reached this place where I now stand, she appeared before me. I saw her as plainly as I now see you!"

Here the girl stopped and covered her face again. Her frame shook, and her heart beat wildly for a moment. She knew she had been dwelling constantly upon her dream,

and the result must have been the coming of this phantasy to her disordered imagination.

"But you said she spoke," whispered the baronet.

"It must have been only a creation of my own agony," the maiden replied.

"But what was't you thought she said?"

"She said, 'Fear not, for an angel of power is nigh unto thee!'"

"And did that frighten you? I have had a dream, too. I saw your—But never mind—"

"That was not all she said, sir," interposed Rosalie, with a shudder. "She said 'twas the Angel of Death was nigh unto me!"

"Ha! Just so she spoke to me!" exclaimed the baronet with a quick start. "But," he added, collecting his thoughts as quickly as possible, "it is but a phantasy of the mind. It means nothing but a dream—come."

"Will you not spare me?"

"Spare thee? I thought you had tried that enough. Spare thee? You are blind! Come, there is no time to waste."

When Rosalie had seen him so moved she had thought him touched with some little spark of sympathy. But she knew him not. He had had a dream; and when she mentioned the appearance of her mother it struck him as being so near like his own phantasy that he could not resist the temptation to ask an explanation. The result may have startled him for a moment; but it was not lasting nor did any fear remain; for if the presence of the death-angel meant anything it must have meant that the daughter would soon join her mother. And he was not the only one that thought so. Rosalie held the same opinion.

Again the baronet placed his hand upon the latch of the door, and this time he opened it. As he did so he turned towards his child and offered her his arm. She dare not refuse it; so she took it, and was conducted into the apartment. She saw Elroy Pemberton, and the first emotion of her soul was one of loathing; but a sense of the position he occupied towards her came whelming upon her mind, and she bowed her head in pain.

"Here, Elroy," spoke the baronet; "she is ready for you. Come."

It was at the last step to the stake—like the kindling of the faggots about the doomed one. She looked up into the face of the lawyer—she knew him—she knew that her prayers could never move him—that for her father's gold he would do anything that could not run his own neck into the noose.

"We'll fix *her* affairs in double-quick time!"

It was the lawyer who said this; and as he spoke there was a cold, heartless smile upon his homely face that gave peculiar point to his words.

Before Rosalie heard that speech she was ready to submit; but her mind changed as if by magic. Should she, while she had life and reason, allow these men to crush her forever? Those words betrayed to her the spirit of the whole transaction. Elroy would have her for the paltry gold she would bring him. Her father would be rid of her for ever; and the attorney stood ready, for hire, to do the work! The cord was touched and the spirit was aroused. She could die; but she would not be that man's wife!

"We'll fix *her* affairs in double-quick time!"

The words went thrilling through her soul, and a new being was awakened into life.

They were making light of her agony!

She knew it; for she saw a dark smile upon Elroy's face in answer to the demoniac smile of the lawyer!

They were regarding her as a mere slave, whose peace—whose soul—was nothing!

The thoughts darted through her mind like lightning, and she started back.

"Come not here!" turning upon Elroy with a flashing eye. "Come not here, for I will not be your wife!"

"Aha! What's to pay now?" exclaimed Lincoln.

"I will not be his wife!" she uttered, moving back to the door. "I know your plans—I know your hearts. I will not be his wife."

"You will not, eh?"

"Never! Never!"

"We'll see!" hissed Sir Arthur, stepping quickly to her

side, and seizing her by the arm. "We'll see whose wife you'll be!"

"Let me go! Kill me! Do anything you will—but not his wife! Never! never!"

As she spoke she broke from the strong arm that held her and sprang to the door. She had no fixed purpose—she only fled from her destruction! The way was thrown open, and she rushed into the hall, where the baronet caught her again with more force than before.

"Girl—are you mad?" he gasped, almost wholly overcome by anger and astoundment. "Do you imagine I will put up with this longer? By my soul's salvation, if ye break from me again, I'll strike thee down, and make thee wed with thy limbs lashed!"

"Never! never! never!" the frantic girl screamed.

"Hush! See!—Hark! You've already drawn the passers-by to the house! There are footsteps in the yard now! Where is Elroy?—Here—bolt this outer door!"

"No! no! no!—Never!" cried Rosalie.

"Idiot!" fairly shrieked the baronet, with rage and vexation; and as he did so he tried to clasp one of his hands over the girl's mouth.

Meantime Elroy hastened out into the hall, and to the door; but he was too late. He had just placed his hand upon the upper bolt, when the door was thrown suddenly back, knocking him at full length upon the floor.

"In heaven's name, what means this? Rosalie, what would they do? What have they done?"

The maiden heard that voice—she gazed up at the speaker—and in a moment more, with all the power she had left, she broke from the grasp that held her, and threw herself upon the bosom of her lover.

"Robert! Robert!" she gasped, "they have not killed you! Oh, they have not!"

"No, blessed one. But tell me—they have not harmed thee?"

"No! no!—thank God, no!"

By this time the baronet had recovered his senses, and Elroy had recovered his feet. The former was upon the

point of speaking, when KARMEL THE SCOUT stepped forward and held up his hand.

"Mercy!" at this moment ejaculated the foul lawyer, trembling like an aspen. "The yard's full of soldiers!"

"Ha!" cried Sir Arthur. "Treason in open day!"

"Poor fool!" spoke Karmel, in a tone of such withering contempt that Lincoln fairly shrank from him; "do you not yet know the truth? You do. But yonder black-coated viper is partly right. I have a dozen American soldiers here in the yard, and more at hand if they are needed. But come—you have a room better than this in which to receive company."

"Back!" hissed Lincoln, as the old scout advanced towards the parlor. "Pollute not my floor with your tread!"

"Arthur Lincoln, I have soldiers without. If you have a fancy that way I can have them in here and let them lash you to your chair! It will be done, sir, if you dare to resist one atom!"

In the mean time Elroy had been measuring his cousin's frame once more with his eye. Perhaps he partly thought if 'twould be safe to attack the young captain; and he also wished to assure himself that it was in reality Robert Pemberton who stood before him—the same Robert who ought to have been hung four-and-twenty hours previously.

"Not dead yet?" he at length muttered.

"Not quite," returned our hero. "Your nicely contrived plan has failed you."

"My plan?" repeated Elroy, trying to appear surprised.

"Oh, you need not make strange of it. We understand who rode to Staten Island, and called a band of the enemy into our State!"

"I didn't do it! You know I didn't do it!" the young villain cried, utterly frightened by the fear that he might again be imprisoned by the Rebels.

"Never mind that," resumed Robert. "I know all about it. I understand you, sir."

Karmel had led the way back to the parlor, and Robert now followed him, leading Rosalie by the hand. Elroy hesitated a few moments; but the thought that Sir Arthur

would surely be able to govern affairs in his own house gave him more assurance, and with a volley of half-uttered oaths he followed on after his cousin.

Arthur Lincoln had sunk into a chair, and was evidently trying to overcome a fearful emotion that had possessed him. Karmel stood a little upon one side, in front of him, and was gazing sternly upon him. The old scout's arms were folded upon his breast, and his features were wrought upon by the most intense loathing and contempt.

Robert had led Rosalie to the sofa on the opposite side of the room from where the host sat. He stood close beside her, with one of her hands clasped within his own, and her head resting upon his arm. She was trembling violently, for she knew not yet how she was to be saved. Yet the old agony was gone—the deathly look had given place to an expression of prayerful hope, and over all gleamed the bright beams of love.

The lawyer had taken a seat in one corner where he was prepared to witness the proceedings. To him there was something awfully outrageous in the forcible entrance of a belligerent party into a citizen's house; and he felt that he might be a very important witness in case of an action for damages.

Elroy stood by his side, gazing first upon Sir Arthur, then upon Karmel, and then upon his cousin and Rosalie. At first he seemed very eager and confident; but when he came to notice the absolute terror which was stamped upon Mr. Lincoln's features his heart began to quake; and finally his knees trembled so that he was forced to sink into a seat.

The storm was gathering. The crash must soon come. Sir Arthur Lincoln bowed his head and covered his face with his hands as though to avoid the stroke. Ah, it was a dreadful moment for him! He knew the man who stood so sternly before him, too well! Back over the years of his manhood his memory ran, and there were two scenes still vividly pictured there that aroused in his soul both horror and remorse! And before him, like an avenging spirit arisen from the tomb of that dread past, stood the only other living man beside himself who could tell the story of his crime!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CONCLUSION.

"ARTHUR LINCOLN," spoke the scout, as soon as all was hushed, "what was the work you had in hand when we entered?"

"Do you imagine I will answer your questions?" the baronet returned. "Who gave you the right to come here and catechise me?"

"Who gave me the right? Oh, Arthur Lincoln, can you still hope to avoid me? Can you hope longer to avoid the disclosures you have feared since you first saw me in this very room last winter?"

"How now, foul Rebel? Have you some base lie conjured up with which to blacken my character?"

"Wretch!" cried Karmel, indignantly; "have you the assurance to meet me thus? *Murderer! Parricide!*"

As these words dropped sternly from the scout's lips, Sir Arthur started up from his chair, and then sank back again. His face had turned to an ashen hue, and his limbs trembled violently.

"Liar!" he gasped, between his firmly set teeth.

"Go on, sir," said Karmel, with a bitter smile upon his lips. "You do not look like an injured man."

"Out, vile dog! I know the lie thou hast cooked up to plague me with. I saw it in your ugly face when I first met thee. Believe him not! He lies in his heart, and in his teeth!"

"Say on," spoke Karmel, calmly. "Say on, Sir Arthur. But I will tell my story to these people, nevertheless. Robert, call in your friends."

Captain Pemberton arose and left the room, and when he returned he was followed by Eugene Deblois and half a dozen soldiers.

These latter men were members of Eugene's company. When he went to Amboy he left them at Newark; and when they found he did not return, as he said he would, part of his company came to New Brunswick in search of

him. They arrived on the previous evening, and had arisen on the previous morning just in season to see their beloved captain ride into the village, with his lady-love and two male companions. They were young men, tall and strong ; and as they entered the parlor they arranged themselves by the door.

"Now, Arthur Lincoln," said the scout, "I will tell you a simple story."

"Ho—go on. 'Tis a brave thing to fashion lies, and then call your own audience to hear them spoken!"

"Never mind," returned Karmel, not at all moved by the words of the other. "We'll go on. First, I would ask you if you remember Walter Marshall?"

Lincoln started at the sound of that name, but he managed to keep his countenance as it was—and that was bad enough.

"Gentlemen," resumed the scout, turning towards the point where Robert and Eugene stood close together, "many years ago there were two boys growing up very near together in a country borough of England. Arthur Lincoln was the son of a titled father, while Walter Marshall was only the child of a retired merchant. Yet both parents were wealthy. As they—the boys—approached the age of manhood, Walter began to discover points of character in his friend which he did not like ; yet he overlooked them all until a circumstance transpired which served to sever the bonds of friendship forever.

"Lord Lincoln died. When he was buried—on the very day of his burial—news came from India that his eldest son was dead. Thus was Arthur left the sole heir to those vast estates. In the evening Walter called upon the orphan heir, and ere he left he knew that Arthur Lincoln had murdered his own father!"

"Liar!" shrieked the baronet, springing to his feet. "It is false!—false as the very father of lies!"

"Mind you," continued the scout, still speaking as before, and seeming to pay no attention to the words just uttered, "Walter Marshall had been to London with Arthur only a few weeks before, and was there cognizant of all the preparations for the murder, which was done by poison!"

Still he would not have been certain of the crime had not the parricide with his own lips confessed it ! ”

“ Base liar ! he did not confess it ! ” gasped Sir Arthur.

“ He spoke very much like it,” resumed Karmel. “ He offered to tell Walter how he could send his father off in the same way. But enough of this. The evidence upon which Walter Marshall based his decision was more than circumstantial. It was positive ; and from that time he could not associate with his friend as he had been wont to do. Arthur soon saw it—he saw that he was avoided—and shortly afterwards Walter received a note from him to this effect : ‘ I know you suspect me of crime. If you breathe a word to a living soul on the subject you will die within twelve hours thereafter. I have men engaged who will not disappoint me ! ’ ”

“ Walter read the letter, and then tore it up. Shortly after this Arthur went to London, and there he plunged into dissipation of the worst kind.

“ Meanwhile Walter was married. He married a girl whom he had long loved, and who, he felt, would make him happy. Her name was Ellen Ross. A year they lived together as happily as could be, and a child—a daughter—was born unto them. At the end of this time Walter’s father died, and the son was obliged, a month afterwards, to go into Scotland on business.

“ While he was gone Arthur Lincoln returned from London. And here let me say what Walter had not known : Ellen had once loved young Lincoln ; but on account of his habits her parents had turned him away. Ah ! she had never quite forgotten him ! Had her parents allowed her to reject him all might have been well ; but they had sent him off, and she never lost her pity for him.

“ And during the young husband’s absence Arthur Lincoln returned. He called upon Ellen—first as a friend—and she did not turn him away. He came again—and again. By and by he dropped the language of friendship, and took up the lover’s plea ! At first Ellen was frightened ; but he worked upon her pity, and she sympathized with him. He saw his vantage, and he followed it up.

With consummate skill he touched her heartstrings ; and finally she bent before him. It was a long work on his part, but he accomplished it at length. Poor Ellen Marshall had become a maniac almost under his influence ; the soft music of his tongue had turned her heart, and the continuous smile he wore in her presence when he was not upon his knees praying to her, melted away the virtue of her soul !

“ Alas ! in an evil hour, the young wife consented to flee with her seducer ! He told her of the new land across the sea, and painted the sweet home they would have there. He had money yet—much money. His estate had been sold, and the money was already on its way to the Colonies of America. And yet the money was not legally his. In the gaming-houses of the great city he had squandered all. His whole estate had been staked and lost ; but he stole the title-deeds of a companion who was drunk, and then hastened home and sold them to a nobleman who had long been anxious to buy.

“ The young mother could not leave her child. Lincoln urged her to do so, but she was fixed in that, and he yielded.

“ And they came to America. A short time Ellen lived a life of wild excitement, and then the evil hour began its sorrows. In a few years Arthur Lincoln lost his love, and began to hate. Ellen was no more joyous ; no more smiling ; no more peaceful. Her seducer chided her, but she could not help it. Finally he confessed to her that he had not gained her wholly out of love, though he did love her. He had been led to the work at first from pure hatred of her husband. He both hated and feared Walter Marshall. He hated him because he would not be his companion ; and because he was a better man ; and because he had won for a wife one whom he could not win. This last thing stung him to the quick. Her parents had turned him away and accepted Walter. He feared Walter, as you know.

“ Meanwhile the husband returned to his home. He entered the house—he found an old woman there whom he had hired for a nurse. He asked for his wife and little

one. He was told they were not at home, but there was a letter for him. He took it—it was from Ellen. He opened it and read. It was very short and blotted with tears. She only told him she was going away over the sea. That she had loved Arthur Lincoln first—that she loved him now. She had thought she loved her husband ; but the old love was the strongest. She said, ‘ God bless you ! ’ She said she should never see him again. And she asked him to forgive her ! Then she wrote, ‘ God forgave me ! ’ and signed her name ! Oh ! it was a—a— very—”

Here the old scout stopped and bowed his head. A violent tremor shook his stout frame, and a deep sob broke from his lips.

And the others were most strangely affected. Rosalie was pale as death, and as she watched the speaker she seemed at times to stop breathing entirely. Robert, too, was most deeply moved. He had heard a part of the story before ; but it was this latter portion that possessed the great interest. Elroy listened attentively, and the shades upon his countenance were many and various ; though doubt and anxiety were the most apparent. As for the lawyer, he looked on with the same sort of interest with which he might have listened to the evidence in a murder trial.

“ I cannot tell you how Walter Marshall lived from that hour,” resumed Karmel, after he has regained somewhat of his composure. “ For long weeks he lay prostrate upon a bed of sickness, from which he had no desire to arise. His wife and child were gone ! They had been his all of earth. But time passed and he recovered. Ellen’s parents came and tried to comfort him ; but they, poor souls, needed comforting as well.

“ At the end of four years the wronged husband resolved to come to America, and hunt up his wife and child. He had made preparations to that effect when he was urged to go to India to transact some business with the company for government. He finally accepted the office, which was one of more than usual trust, and instead of putting his effects on board the American packet, he put them into the stateroom of an Indiaman.

“ He was in India six years, and then returned to England. A year was passed at home, but there was no joy for him. Again he resolved to start for the American Colonies ; and this time he did so. He changed all his property into cash, and bade adieu to his native land. He left the ship at Boston, and there made inquiries for Arthur Lincoln. He searched through that city ; then to Rhode Island ; then to Connecticut ; then to New York ; then to Philadelphia ; and so on all over the land ; but he found not what he sought.

“ After this he returned to Boston ; and there it was that he first studied into the wrongs the colonies were suffering. He had resolved to make this country his home ; and he immediately became interested in all that could affect its welfare.

“ Time passed on. He had much property, and most of it invested there. At length the war broke out. Boston was besieged, and the question was fairly up for settlement by force of arms : Shall America be free ? Meanwhile, Walter learned that a man of the name of Arthur Lincoln lived in New Brunswick. He came here—he saw the man !

“ Ah—then for the first time, he fully realized how many years had passed away since that fatal blow. Arthur had grown to be an old man ! Ellen was a woman of middle-age ; and his child—he knew ’twas his own, for he had learned that they had had no children since their settlement here, seventeen years ago—that child had grown to be a beautiful maiden.

“ For a while he thought of revealing himself and punishing the villain ; but upon more deliberate reflection he concluded to wait. He wished to know how his wife felt—how the affections of his child were fixed—and thus know how to act. He reluctantly made up his mind that if he found his child truly beloved by her supposed father, and she in turn, with her heart’s true affection fixed upon him, he would never dispel the allusion—never claim her—never know her as his. Yet he meant to remain in this section and watch for himself. He threw off his real name, and took the name of his mother ; and thus he went at the work.

"And still time passed on. He had made the acquaintance of several Patriot officers, and had been introduced to Washington in Boston, with whom he became quite intimate. His recent connection with the British government officers had given him quite an insight into the characters of the British leaders, and to the American commander-in-chief he gave much valuable information. While here he received a letter from Washington requesting to see him. He went. The general asked him if he would take charge of the secret service of the Jerseys. He answered in the affirmative ; and from that time he had his hands full.

"Fortune at length threw him into the power of the enemy. He was cast into a strong dungeon, and on the next day, he stood face to face with Arthur Lincoln ! Again he was imprisoned, and at night his own sweet child came and set him free ! Oh, she dreamed not then whom she was—"

The old scout had stopped here. His feelings again overpowered him, and he buried his face in his hands. Rosalie had thus far remained silent ; her frame had been quivering, and heart leaping most painfully. But she could bear up no longer. With one low, wild cry, she bounded forward and sank upon the bosom of her own true father ! Now she knew why she had so strangely loved that man, and she knew, too, why he had been so deeply moved in her presence. She did not speak—she could not. She could only cling frantically to that stout bosom, and weep in the fullness of her great joy.

The old man wound his arms about her, and, with big tears still rolling down his cheeks, he resumed his narrative. He spoke hurriedly now—like one who must make haste, or fail in his purpose for want of strength.

"I need not speak of Walter Marshall again as one other than myself," he said, "for you know me now. My child freed me from prison, and I fled from the power of my enemies. Ere long I heard Ellen was dying ! Must she die and I not see her ? I could not bear the thought. I knew that Lincoln did not treat her well—that she was unhappy, and, I believed, repentant. But she was in the midst of my deadly enemies. If they saw me I should

surely die. At length I hit upon a plan. I found a man who said he could cut off my beard, and arrange it upon a silken ground, that I could wear it again without any one's detecting any change. I bade him do it. He cut my beard carefully, arranging it as it came off, and I left him to have it prepared for me when I came back.

"With my face smooth, and with a wig which this same man lent me, I assumed a female disguise, and thus I came to this house—and thus I gained entrance to my wife.

"Oh, what a meeting was that! How many times have I thanked God since, that I came! Upon my bosom my wife received my forgiveness, and upon my bosom she poured out the story of her sufferings! Every night for long years had she prayed for me in secret; and her only hope beyond the good of her child had been that she might be taken home to God, and there, in the fullness of time, meet her husband, and know that she was forgiven! That she could meet me on earth in friendship she had not even dared to hope for. She told me how, long ago, her seducer had ceased to love her—how he had confessed that he had stolen her away mostly out of revenge and hatred upon me—and how he had never loved my child—never!

"She showed me a paper she had written for Rosalie. It was the simple story of her crime, her sufferings, and begging her loved one to forgive her, and also giving information to her—to Rosalie—of her true father. I was then in danger—I might not live to reveal myself to my child—so I sat down and wrote my forgiveness and my blessing. I pressed my beloved—oh, I loved her then!—I pressed her once more to my bosom—held her there awhile—prayed with her—and then tore myself away!

"Oh, I wished then to see my child—to tell her who I was, but I dared not. It would not only have been too dangerous, but it would have thrown her into a state of excitement from which she not easily might have recovered. So I came away, only blessing her in my heart, and praying to God for his protection over her.

"Soon I learned of a fearful danger to which my child was exposed. The position of the British army here ren-

dered it impossible for us to come on. But fortune threw one of the necessary instruments to the consummation of that dangerous plan into our power ; and while we held him we knew Rosalie was safe. When he was set free, we followed him very closely ; but yet a strange haste in evil on the part of the old villain came well nigh thwarting us. Yet we saved her that time ; but only for the moment. A well-concocted plan placed us in the power of our enemies ; but God meant not that such evil should triumph. Deliverance came—and we are here !—here just in time to avert the blow—in time to save my child—my own, my loved, my darling child ! ”

It was a strange scene which followed. The old scout sank exhausted into a seat, with Rosalie still clinging to him. All had expected that Lincoln would rave, and swear that it was all false. But he spoke not a word. Pale as death he sat there—he gazed about—he saw all eyes bent upon him—and, while a violent tremor suddenly shook his frame, he started from his chair and staggered to the door. The soldiers would have stopped him, but Robert bade them not—and passed on.

Elroy next arose to leave. He felt that he had no more to remain there for. But he was not permitted to go alone.

“ You are a prisoner ! ” said Eugene, advancing and placing his hand upon his arm.

“ Me ? *Me* a prisoner ? ” he gasped, pale and trembling with fright. “ Why ?—W—w—what for ? ”

“ We’ll tell you at some more convenient opportunity.” And thus speaking, Eugene motioned for two of his men ; and they came and led the trembling wretch away.

As the door closed upon the retiring prisoner, the old lawyer started to his feet. He worked his face up into a smile, and then approaching the old scout, he said, with a reckless profusion of bows and smirks :

“ Really, my dear friend, I am delighted with the turn affairs have taken. It is truly happy to my soul. I welcome you to our midst. I never had perfect confidence in Mr. Lincoln—never. There was something in him I didn’t like. He didn’t have the kind, generous face you’ve got.

Forgive the flattery ; but I'm a plain-spoken man, sir. You may—ahem—you may want some business done in the legal line. I should be happy—”

“Eugene,” interrupted the scout, in a quiet tone, “show this man to the door.”

In blank amazement the attorney was led out ; and it was only by the most heroic self-denial that Eugene deprived himself of the luxury of administering one parting kick to the base hireling.

Over the scene of that reunion we will draw the curtain. It was a holy season, and full of pure emotions. As Rosalie had read the paper her mother had left, she understood those strange words she had heard shortly before the death-angel came. She knew now what that mother meant when she said :

“I have been wearing away for years ! My soul has been the constant abode of a cankering grief, and my heart has lain beneath a weight of remorse that has well nigh crushed it ! Remember my words, for at some time you shall know their meaning, though not while I live !”

Ah—they were plain now. Painfully plain ! The child sank upon her knees, and with uplifted heart and hands she prayed for the soul that had gone.

* * * * * *

Arthur Lincoln lay down upon his bed with an aching head. The doctor came and told him he had a heart-disease ; and when he had said so, he asked the sick man if he had ever had any great misfortune over which he had brooded. Arthur Lincoln said no. But even when he spoke he remembered a father who once lived and loved him. He remembered that father's death ; and he knew that since that hour he had never seen one moment of pure, calm joy.

Arthur Lincoln became very sick ; and one day he bade Mrs. Lee send Rosalie to him. The girl came. The invalid drew her to him and asked her if she could forgive him.

And from that time Mrs. Reed came to his bedside no more. Rosalie sat by him and ministered to his every

want ; and finally, when she became weak and exhausted, good Aunt Patience came back and helped her.

One afternoon, while the scout and Robert were at Van Ruter's, they received a message from Rosalie. Sir Arthur wished to see them. They went and they found him dying. He reached out his thin hand to Robert and asked him to forgive him for all that he had done towards his injury. And Robert forgave him freely.

Then Arthur Lincoln turned to the man whom, of all others, he had wronged the most on earth.

"Walter," he whispered, in a husky, failing tone, "can you forgive me for all my wickedness to you? I am dying—I am passing away from the scene of my great crimes. Forgive me! Oh, forgive!"

"With all my heart!" answered Walter Marshall. "As I hope to be forgiven of God for my sins on earth, so do I forgive thee all!"

A faint gleam of gratitude swept across the face of Arthur Lincoln, and his lips moved. But he spoke no word. He was dead!

* * * * *

Elroy Pemberton begged so hard, and promised so much that Captain Deblois, by the consent of Robert, let him go. Shortly afterwards his father had a desirable offer for his place, and he sold it and went to England. Elroy went with him ; and the cousins never met again.

* * * * *

Time passed on. Days made weeks—weeks became months—and months rolled on to years. The din of war sounded o'er the land ; and liberty's battalions bore nobly on to victory.

It was a calm, a pleasant day of November, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-three. In that same parlor where we have witnessed such varied scenes, sat Rosalie and Clara—maidens no more—but wives and mothers. Aye—they had been married some years, for those laughing, prattling children are theirs—happy, happy children, with such mothers to love and bless them. And

happy, happy mothers, with such children to love and bless.

A curly-headed boy goes to Rosalie's knees, and looks up into her face, and asks :

"When will papa come?"

"Hark ! What sound is that ?"

It is the sound of steps in the hall. The door is thrown open, and ere Rosalie or Clara can gain their feet two children cry out in joyous notes :

"Papa ! Papa !"

Robert Pemberton leads the way. Eugene Deblois comes next ; and while Rosalie and Clara are clinging wildly to the bosoms of their husbands, the children all rush for that old man who has just entered, and who stoops down and gathers them all into his embrace, and kisses them one after the other. And when they call him "Grandpa," we know him for Karmel the Scout—Karmel of old—Karmel the Tory trapper—but now plain old Walter Marshall, one of the happiest men who lives with buried griefs.

"Dear Robert, must you go to battle any more ?" asked Rosalie, eagerly, and with moistened eyes.

"No—no, sweet wife !" the husband answers. "The war is over ! The last battle is fought ! We shall leave you no more. Liberty has triumphed !—the enemy are conquered !—and AMERICA IS FREE !"

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WHEN I was sixteen years old I belonged to a composition class. It was our custom to go on the recitation seat every day with clean slates, and we were allowed ten minutes to write seventy words on any subject the teacher thought suited to our capacity. One day he gave out "What a Man Would See if He Went to Greenland." My heart was in the matter, and before the ten minutes were up I had one side of my slate filled. The teacher listened to the reading of our compositions, and when they were all over he simply said: "Some of you will make your living by writing one of these days." That gave me something to ponder upon. I did not say so out loud, but I knew that my composition was as good as the best of them. By the way, there was another thing that came in my way just then. I was reading at that time one of Mayne Reid's works which I had drawn from the library, and I pondered upon it as much as I did upon what the teacher said to me. In introducing Swartboy to his readers he made use of this expression: "No visible change was observable in Swartboy's countenance." Now, it occurred to me that if a man of his education could make such a blunder as that and still write a book, I ought to be able to do it, too. I went home that very day and began a story, "The Old Guide's Narrative," which was sent to the *New York Weekly*, and came back, respectfully declined. It was written on both sides of the sheets but I didn't know that this was against the rules. Nothing abashed, I began another, and receiving some instruction, from a friend of mine who was a clerk in a book store, I wrote it on only one side of the paper. But mind you, he didn't know what I was doing. Nobody knew it; but one

day, after a hard Saturday's work—the other boys had been out skating on the brick-pond—I shyly broached the subject to my mother. I felt the need of some sympathy. She listened in amazement, and then said: "Why, do you think you could write a book like that?" That settled the matter, and from that day no one knew what I was up to until I sent the first four volumes of Gunboat Series to my father. Was it work? Well, yes; it was hard work, but each week I had the satisfaction of seeing the manuscript grow until the "Young Naturalist" was all complete.

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